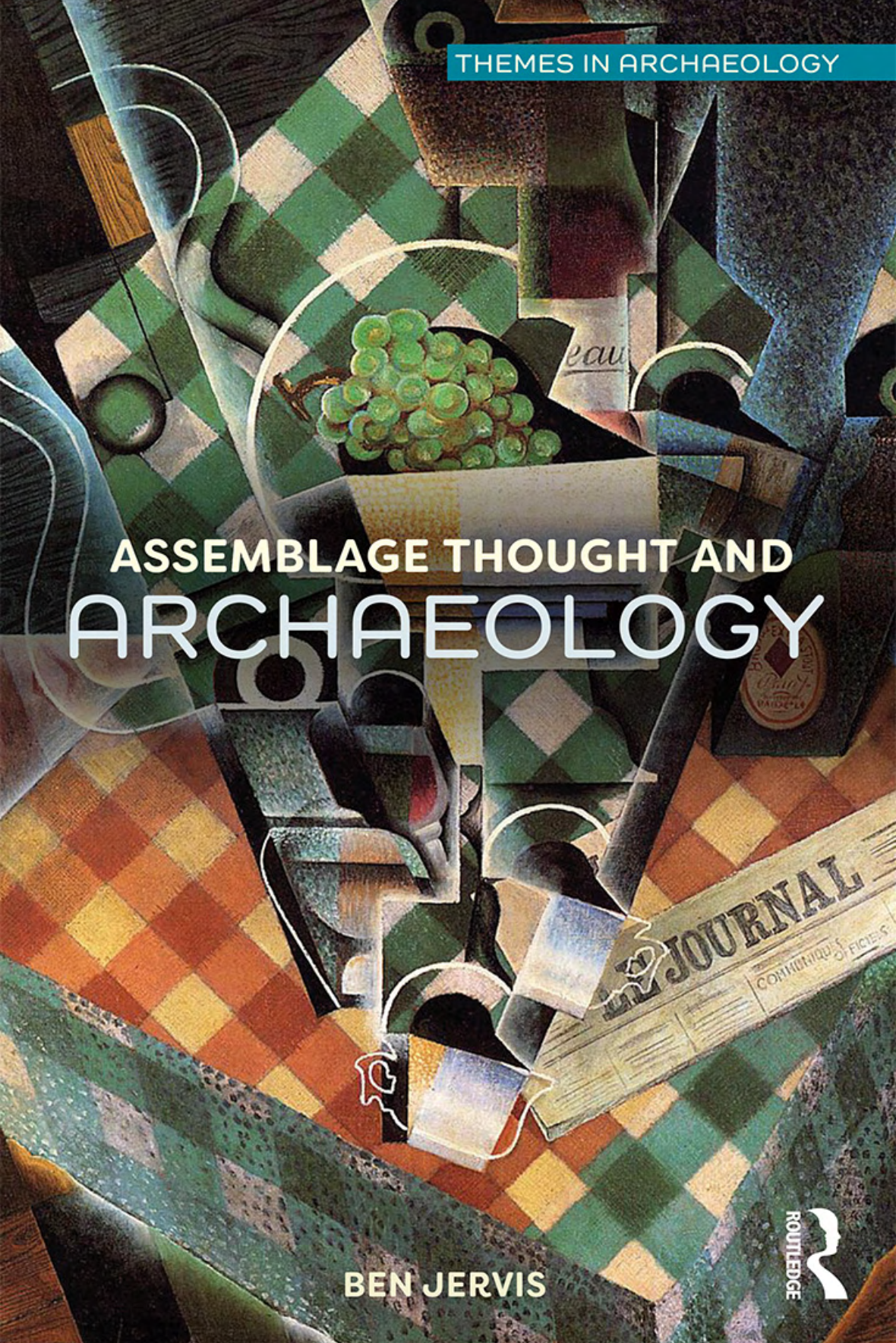




THEMES IN ARCHAEOLOGY

ASSEMBLAGE THOUGHT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

BEN JERVIS

ROUTLEDGE

ASSEMBLAGE THOUGHT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

From examinations of prehistoric burial to understanding post-industrial spaces and heritage practices, the writing of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari is gaining increasing importance within archaeological thought. Their concept of ‘assemblages’ allows us to explore the past in new ways, by placing an emphasis on difference rather than similarity, on fluidity rather stasis and unpredictability rather than reproduceable models.

Assemblage Thought and Archaeology applies the notion of assemblage to specific archaeological case studies, ranging from early urbanism in Mesopotamia to 19th century military fortifications. It introduces the concept of assemblage within the context of the wider ‘material turn’ in the social sciences, examines its implications for studying materials and urban settlements, and explores its consequences for the practice of archaeological research and heritage management.

This innovative book will be of particular interest to postgraduate students of archaeological theory and researchers looking to understand this latest trend in archaeological thought, although the case studies will also have appeal to those whose work focusses on material culture, settlement archaeology and archaeological practice.

Ben Jervis is lecturer in medieval archaeology at Cardiff University, UK. He is currently co-investigator (with Dr Chris Briggs) on the Leverhulme Trust project Living Standards and Material Culture in English Rural Households: 1300–1600. He is the author of *Pottery and Social Life: Towards a Relational Approach*, 2014, and co-editor of several books including *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe* (2016), and *Archaeologies of Rules and Regulation: Between Text and Practice* (2018). He has also published in journals including *World Archaeology*, *Medieval Archaeology*, *The Norwegian Archaeological Review* and *Archaeological Dialogues*.

Themes in Archaeology

The Archaeology of Art: An Ontology of the Archaeological Image, Andrew Cochrane and Andrew Jones

The Archaeology of Time, Gavin Lucas

The Archaeology of Personhood: An Anthropological Approach, Chris Fowler

Archaeology, Ritual, Religion, Timothy Insoll

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Ben Jervis

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1

ASSEMBLAGE, ONTOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Introducing assemblage thought

It may, at first, seem odd to turn to a collaboration between a renegade philosopher and former school teacher (Gilles Deleuze) who rejected the mainstream canon of philosophical writing and a psychoanalyst and Marxist political activist (Felix Guattari) to build a framework for understanding the past. In their collaborative writing, however, we find tools and ideas which can be used to challenge orthodoxy and structure, to enable us to engage with the past in alternative, and potentially fruitful, ways. These tools, known collectively as assemblage thought, are concerned with understanding the ways in which orders emerge, how they hold together and how they fall apart and, crucially, their implications for shaping the world as affective processes.

Importantly, we should not see assemblage thought as originating with Deleuze and Guattari, as this would contradict their very approach to research, which is less concerned with origins than middles, with ongoing processes; Deleuze and Guattari's writing emerged from a range of influences, philosophical, artistic, political and historical, and has gone on to flow through a scholarship in a range of disciplines; as a body of thought it is never complete, but always being worked on, adapting and changing as it is applied. As a body of thought it acts as the very ideas which underpin it; immanence, emergence and difference. 'Assemblage theory' was not a term used by Deleuze and Guattari, having been coined by the philosopher Manuel DeLanda (2006; 2016) in his re-imagining of their writing. It is best understood not as a unified theory, but as a set of ideas and tools which can be used to build a radical view of an immanent world, in which core themes which have dominated archaeological theory in recent decades; structure, individuality and identity, representation and power, are critiqued and re-conceptualised. The result is that they are not frames for understanding action, but emerge from, and are

2 Assemblage, ontology and archaeology

manipulated by, the ongoing productive processes which constitute a world which is always emerging. This is a world which is always in a state of becoming, rather than existing in a fixed state.

As we will discover, everything is an assemblage, from a pot to a city, from a house to an economy. Objects are assemblages not only of materials, which are constantly changing, for example as they corrode, but also of ideas and are, themselves, components of other assemblages; households or communities, being active participants in the formation of the relationships which constitute those assemblages. Assemblages are not fixed entities, but fluid, ongoing and finite *processes*. Thinking through assemblages therefore turns entities into processes and calls on us to question temporal and physical boundaries. Assemblage thought shifts our focus to the intensities which are productive of societies; we come to encounter a material world which is not representative of the past, but is productive, unstable and full of potential to destabilise received ideas, recover new stories and craft pasts which reveal the complexities of power dynamics which transcend any division between the human and non-human, past and present or near and far.

The ideas discussed in this book are derived from Deleuze and Guattari's principal collaborative works, known collectively as *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, these two volumes are *Anti-Oedipus* (first published 1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987, first published 1980). A great deal has been written about the nature of the collaboration between Deleuze and Guattari and the context of their writing and it is not appropriate or necessary to offer a full analysis here. It is, however, worth briefly reflecting upon the aims of the authors and the immediate context in which they were writing. As a philosopher, Deleuze had, by 1972, carved out a reputation as a character not afraid to challenge the dominant philosophical ideals (see Bogue 1989, 1–3; Holland 2013, 2–3). He rejected mainstream philosophical writing as being too egocentric and, whilst embracing structuralism's move away from this approach, was also opposed to the imposition of structure itself. Instead, he focussed on the writings of less well known philosophers, with ideas derived from Nietzsche, Bergson and Spinoza featuring strongly in elements of his collaborative writing with Guattari. His principal work before the collaboration with Guattari was his thesis *Difference and Repetition* (1968), in which he argues that the concepts of difference and becoming should have priority over identity and being; that is an emphasis on experience and emergence rather than on a world defined and conceived of in advance; as Tamsin Lorraine (2005, 159) summarises:

In Deleuze's view, common sense notions of space and time as totalised wholes within which everything can be either spatially or chronologically related with respect to everything else are no more than retrospective constructs.

Guattari on the other hand was less established from an academic perspective. He was a well known Marxist activist in France and worked as a psychoanalyst at the La Borde clinic. He had similar concerns to Deleuze, in challenging the orthodoxy of scholarship in his field, in particular seeking to rethink concepts of

reality and group dynamics. This was achieved through a realisation that reality is defined through relations and, from a political perspective, should be free-formed and emergent rather than rigid and hierarchical, effectively seeing institutions as repressive and subjective group processes as enabling. The political implications of this were recognised in Guattari's critique of the working of the Communist party (1972; see Bogue 1989, 86–7; Holland 2013, 3–4).

The collaboration between Deleuze and Guattari coincided with the student revolt of May 1968. The relationship between *Anti-Oedipus* and this event is contested and, whilst the revolt was unlikely to be the catalyst for writing, it certainly had an effect in framing the ideas developed within it (see Buchanan 2008, 7–12). Deleuze and Guattari were clearly sympathetic to the anti-capitalist sentiment of the uprising, but did not seek one political order to simply be replaced by another; they had a bigger intention, to shake up power structures and change them from within so as not to replicate repression, but to create potential for alternative systems of governance and society to emerge. When taking the tools offered by assemblage thought it is easy to forget the radical political motivation of the authors (see Russell *et al* 2011) but it is, perhaps, useful to find parallels with their ideas within the discipline of archaeology; our aim in using assemblage approaches should, perhaps, be to challenge structures and ideas which repress free thought and imaginative interpretation, which reproduce subjective ideas as objective facts, and, in doing so, embrace the diversity of the past.

For the archaeologist seeking to engage with assemblage thought for the first time, the dense and abstract writing of Deleuze and Guattari is extremely challenging. A more accessible rendering of their key concepts can be found in the writing of Manuel DeLanda (1997; 2002; 2006; 2016), who seeks to employ their concepts in a more practical way to explore the emergence of western hegemony in the modern world and, particularly, explores questions surrounding the city and its implications (particularly DeLanda 1997; 2006) and scientific process (particularly DeLanda 2002; 2016). As will become clear in the following sections, at times DeLanda has taken the original ideas and developed them (most notably in his consideration of the relationship between the meshwork and hierarchy), but he also successfully simplifies concepts which are referred to in multiple ways in Deleuze and Guattari's writing, to create a more manageable set of theoretical apparatus.

It is not my aim here to reflect in detail on the genealogy of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, but rather to explore in direct, practical, terms their potential for archaeological research. In doing so, this introductory chapter situates the emergence of assemblage approaches within archaeology, seeing them as a part of a wider ontological turn across the humanities, exploring its parallels with other bodies of sociological or philosophical literature (particularly Actor-Network Theory) and introducing some archaeological articulations of these ideas. The following chapters go on to introduce some of the key concepts which characterise assemblage thought (Chapter 2) and apply these to the study of material culture (Chapter 3) and urban archaeology (Chapter 4). The book concludes with a consideration of the implications of assemblage thought for archaeological practice (Chapter 5).

Stimulating alternative archaeologies: the ontological turn

Archaeologists are turning to approaches such as assemblage thought because over the last two decades there has been a mounting critique across the social sciences of the implications of modern western thought, both for our practices of research and our interpretations of how things are. This has been driven largely by the application of post-colonial approaches within archaeology and anthropology and the reading of anti-humanist thinkers such as Foucault and Heidegger (see Thomas 2004; Henare *et al* 2007, 7–12; Watts 2013; Harris and Cipolla 2017, 171–80 for overviews). Fundamentally, we have called into question the justification for framing our research around the modernist dichotomies of society/nature or culture/material (Henare *et al* 2007, 3; Olsen *et al* 2012, 29). A representational approach, in which things are not seen as beings occupying a world with us, but as standing for human ideas or behaviours, has been argued to have left things behind, making them intermediaries, rather than mediators, in social action and underestimating their implications for the world (Olsen *et al* 2012, 20–22; Jones 2012, 6–7). This realisation, and the reaction against it, has been conceptualised in the literature as a ‘turn to the material’ or as an ‘ontological turn’. This ‘turn’ has not been without its criticisms, with some claiming that it has led to a de-humanisation of archaeological study (Van Dyke 2015; Barrett 2016) and others suggesting that the so-called turn is nothing more than a re-dressing of ideas and arguments (Ingold 2014). Whether a new development, or an intensification in the application of old ideas, we have reached a point where the representational orthodoxy of archaeology has come under sustained critique.

Benjamin Alberti (2016) has identified that there are two key strands to ontological work within archaeology. The first, which he terms a “new metaphysics for archaeology” (2016, 165), is concerned with the implications of how we think about the past in general terms, as a process of unfolding relations. We must be able to step away from a modernist position to be open to the potential of these relations, which may exceed those which are deemed possible from the ontological position of the ‘modern’. The second is an ontologically focussed archaeology, in which indigenous theories form the basis of archaeological interpretation and in which we make indigenous ontologies an object of study. There is also a need to find common ground between these two approaches, in order to fully comprehend the implications of the ontological turn for our understanding of the past. From the outset, my position is largely one of using assemblage thought to exploit the methodological and interpretive benefits of an ontologically enlightened archaeology. With its rejection of structure, its emphasis on becoming and relations, as well as its conscious effort to overcome modernist dichotomies, I argue that assemblage thought is one toolkit which can be used to achieve this goal. However, as we come to reflect on the implications of our own ontological position on our work, the potential to examine the ontologies of past societies a research question in itself will inevitably emerge (Alberti 2016).

The first question has to be why is ontological awareness important? Ontology can be conceptualised in two ways: “as a people’s ‘beliefs about’ reality or as a people’s reality” (Alberti 2016, 164). My preference is for the latter definition, for two key reasons. Firstly, the former implies a form of meta-ontology, the existence of a single reality which is interpreted, and the second is that it is exciting to be speculative in thinking about the richness that an awareness of other realities could offer. To think about ontology is, therefore, to think about the multiple ways in which the world might exist, to be aware of possibility and the potency of a world beyond our own experience (Alberti *et al* 2011, 897–8; 901; Henare *et al* 2007, 1, 13). Whilst it might be proposed that assemblage thought itself makes ontological claims, for example that the world is in a state of becoming and that it is relational, my position is that its core value is methodological in that its focus on relations and their implications creates a space in which multiple realities can exist; rather than being an ontology in itself, for me assemblage thought is a method from which various ontologies might emerge. Deleuze and Guattari do not deny the existence of a modernist ontology, being more concerned with how it emerged, how it persists and its societal or political implications. This is not possible if we adopt a modernist ontological position, as this effectively translates the other worlds of the past into a purified, anthropocentric and bounded history, one in which elements not compatible with modern western story-telling, like the potency of materials or objects, are lost (Anderson 2015, 287–9). Furthermore, as Timothy Pauketat (2013, 5–6) states “beliefs about science rooted in modern rationality fail to appreciate the alternate ontologies – the theories of being- of ancient worlds”, meaning that our understanding of the motivations and behaviour of past people are left lacking. Approaches such as assemblage thought help us to overcome this problem by getting to know our evidence in new ways (Alberti *et al* 2011, 899). An awareness of ontological difference forces us to reflect on the implications of how we think and write about the past: even if we are alive to difference we may continue to write in terms unrecognisable to the societies that we study, however we can adopt a degree of sensitivity or contextual relevance by framing questions in ways which problematise the evidence, rather than being focussed around our western ‘truths’ (Anderson 2015, 803).

It is these western ‘truths’ which have arguably served to colonise the past, to represent it in our own terms by homogenising experience and masking difference. Therefore, being alive to difference offers one route to de-colonisation (Haber 2013, 88). Yet, we cannot simply adopt another ontological position, to do so would reify some other dichotomy; to reject a modern nature/culture divide is to acknowledge and reify a difference between modern/non-modern, for example (Bessire and Bond 2014, 442). Furthermore, by uncritically adopting the ontology of the other we are arguably being equally colonial by abducting that reality, rather than reflecting upon it from our own position (Bessire and Bond 2014, 443). Our approach to ontology might be characterised in two divergent ways; what Bruno

Latour (2009) terms ontology as a 'type' or as a 'bomb'. This characterisation derives from a consideration of the differences in the use of animism (the attribution of the characteristic of a living being to things which may not be conventionally perceived of as alive from a western perspective) by two of the anthropologists most influential within the ontological turn. For Phillipe Descola (2013), animism is a *type* of ontology. This approach should appeal to the archaeologist, as we can plug an archaeological culture into an ontological typology and use this to create more nuanced and culturally appropriate interpretation. However, I follow Lucas Bessire and David Bond (2014, 447) in suggesting that the idea of ontological purity is a fallacy. The non-human does not respect ontological difference, it moves between ontological realms, both human and non-human action overflow their bounds and have wider implications. Rather than adopting a particular ontological position it is, perhaps, more fruitful to be aware of the potential for difference and the value of speculating beyond our own ontological bounds, whilst holding on to a critical awareness that our own perception is based upon our own experiences and relations with the world. In other words, to use an awareness of ontological difference as a 'bomb' to destabilise our understanding of the world and the worlds of others. This is effectively the way in which Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998; 2004) utilises the idea of Amerindian perspectivism (in which the non-human such as animals are objects which take on the characteristics of the human), not to suggest that this is a type of ontology which can be widely transferred but, rather, to open up productive spaces for enquiries into the potential for other modes of existence.

It is this role of animism as 'bomb' which I am most interested in, and is critical to the way that the ontological turn has impacted upon archaeological practice. It was only until recently that alternative ontologies were seen not as ontology (other worlds) but as epistemology (ways of thinking about the world). This is a key concern of Viveiros de Castro (1998; 2004; 2014), himself inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, who argues that this is the result of a purification of ontological difference, undertaken to allow for this difference to exist from the modernist position as a primitive set of 'beliefs' set in opposition to scientific reality, rather than being a potential reality in itself. In other words the discussion of animism has been undertaken in western terms (Alberti and Bray 2009, 337). Once we take these other forms of knowledge seriously and realise that they might be a resource for our own theory building (Alberti and Marshall 2009, 344) then we must accept that things are not just thought about differently but *are* actually different for those communities of knowledge (Holbraad 2009, 434). Take, for example, the powder known as *Aché* discussed by Martin Holbraad (2007), used in Ifá worship in Cuba. From a western perspective it is an inert powder taken to be representative of power, but within the Ifá ontology the powder is not *analogous* to power, but *is power itself*; the thing does not represent the concept, the thing is the concept. As such, we can take this ontological difference as a challenge to our own assumptions, to embrace plurality and know things differently, rather than simply thinking of them differently in a way which continues to purify knowledge by converting ontology to epistemology (Zedeño 2009, 408).

Because an animist ontology is based on action and relations, rather than representation, we can shift the focus of enquiry from one which is anthropocentric to one which problematises the effects of relations; humans do not act alone but as beings in a world of things (Bird-David 1999; Bray 2009, 314). Critically, the value of seeing animism, and by extension, other ontologies, as a ‘bomb’ is not in simply transferring ontology by analogy to archaeological datasets, but in allowing us to explore whether and how past societies, both animist and non-animist, have had to live with vibrant materials, a notion which sits uneasily within a modernist ontological position (Pollard 2013, 184–5; Ingold 2013, 78–81) and that knowledge and realities are not transcendental but emerge through these relations (Groleau 2009, 399). The concern here is with giving credibility to other possibilities and questioning our assumptions (Alberti 2013, 45; Field Murray and Mills 2013, 135). As Tim Ingold (2006, 13–14) and Alf Hornborg (2006, 22–4) highlight, ‘moderns’ *do* animate, they *do* ascribe agency to the non-human (think, for example, about how we might call our broken computer a “stupid thing!”) and, therefore, whilst potentially not being animist in the anthropological sense, they are not purely ‘modern’ either. The ontological turn acknowledges that this awareness is reality, not a juvenile or irrational fetishism of the material. Therefore, the ontological turn, if nothing else, reminds us that things can be beings in the world, that they have implications and that we should seek to acknowledge these. This does not mean that we should simply endow properties of liveliness upon things, but does mean that we should allow them to emerge, or be revealed, through engagements with them; to be recognised as potent or active, things cannot be considered in isolation but must be understood relationally. It is here that assemblage thought offers potential to think about relations, not at the expense of people or things, but as fundamental to their being. The aim is not necessarily to change our own ontology, which is inevitably the product of our own situated engagement with the world, but to change practice, so that we do not automatically assume a distinction exists between nature and culture or the living and the material (Olsen *et al* 2012, 32).

Sources of difference: where anthropology and philosophy meet

From an anthropological perspective, the ontological turn has marked a shift in how alternative ontologies are implicated in research. The traditional approach has been one of ethnography, of describing and documenting alternative world-views. Following Ingold (2013, 4–5) the activation of ontological difference in research allows a more speculative, anthropological, form of research endeavour to emerge; one in which enquiry is not restricted by modernist dualisms and in which we are able to be open to the vibrant nature of the material world. This is not to say that we must all become animists or totemists in our material engagements, but, rather, that we are better equipped to be alive to the fact that the material has implications for our experiences of the world, and also for our behaviour within it.

Ethnography is only one area of research within which ontological difference has emerged as an area of enquiry, and had an impact on archaeological practice. Another example is Science and Technology Studies (STS) – a reflection on the processes through which scientific knowledge is generated and put to work, out of which Actor-Network Theory (ANT) developed (see Latour 2005; Law 2010). Such approaches emerged in response to a realisation of the limitations of a view that technology is socially constructed through the human manipulation of the material, with an alternative understanding of a world formed of relations emerging (see Law 2010 for a review). Scientific experiments, for example, come to be not about recovering knowledge which exists prior to action, but rather of assembling heterogeneous materials and understanding the effect of the relations formed between them, relations which include not only the subject of analysis, but also the scientist themselves and their instruments and equipment; knowledge emerges from these relations in messy and unpredictable ways (Law 2004). The practice of archaeology can be viewed in similar terms (see Chapter 5), as messy interactions with things from the past and scientific equipment, whilst such perspectives can also be applied to the relations which constitute past societies themselves (see below). Thinking in this way strips things of an essential character, they become actualised differently as they are drawn into different sets of relations, acting as a component of assemblages in unpredictable and distinctive ways (Mol and Law 1995), in other words mattering is multiple (Mol 2002).

Also developing out of studies of scientific practice, Karen Barad's (2003; 2007) agential realism has proved fruitful for archaeologists (Fowler 2013; Marshall and Alberti 2014; Fowler and Harris 2015). Barad demonstrates how scientific knowledge emerges from configurations of knowledge, equipment and substances and that, depending upon how we encounter particular phenomena, we may understand them in different ways. An electron, for example might behave as a wave or a particle, with its form being determined by the ways in which we seek to measure it. In other words, there is not a single phenomenon to 'find' but multiple possibilities to actualise. Such an approach forces us to reflect differently on archaeological knowledge as the product of processes of assemblage, of our interactions with archaeological things, and to realise the potential for multiple pasts, meanings and characterisations to emerge.

It is not only in STS and the philosophy of science that new approaches to the world have emerged. Within the field of human geography non-representational approaches have received increasing traction (see Anderson *et al* 2012). Growing from the application of similar philosophical works to those utilised by archaeologists and anthropologists, such approaches question divisions between society and the environment and propose radical ways of coming to better understand the world (e.g. Whatmore 1999; 2002; Thrift 2002; 2007; Anderson and Harrison 2010; McFarlane 2011a; the implications of these approaches in relation to urban geography and archaeology are explored in Chapter 4; see Jones 2012, 24–6 for a discussion of some of these approaches within an archaeological context). Foremost among these scholars is Nigel Thrift, who set out to develop a 'lively' geography,

concerned with exploring ‘differents’ and ‘manyness’. His project had origins in a diverse body of philosophical writing, including that of Deleuze and Guattari (see Thrift 2002 for an overview) and sees the world not as a bounded set of entities, but as a series of affective intensities, it is non-representational in the sense that representation equates to stability, whereas Thrift’s approach is focussed on exploring change and unfolding. As Hayden Lorimer (2005, 84) states, the ‘non’ of non-representational theory has hindered its application, as the equation of representation with stability has been mistaken for a lack of interest in representation (see also Doel 2010). He prefers the phrase “more-than-representational”; this is not to deny that things cannot be representational, but highlights that they do more than represent. Furthermore, this representation is not prior to thought or action, but, rather, comes to be contingent upon engagements with the world – worlds only exist in relation to themselves, emerging from what came before through re-representation and affect (Dewsbury 2010, 152). By thinking in this way, the social becomes more than human, instead we develop a materialist view of the world, in which participants are not limited in an *a priori* manner, instead “everything takes-part and in taking-part, takes-place; everything happens, everything acts” (Anderson and Harrison 2010, 14) and rather than being defined entities, things are always becoming (Greenhough 2010, 38). It is, therefore, in processes of assemblage, of coming together that the complex, hybridised, effective entanglements which constitute the world emerge in ways which cannot be neatly divided into natural and cultural realms (Whatmore 1999).

Across archaeology, anthropology and geography the work of Tim Ingold (2000; 2007a; 2013) has been particularly influential. Ingold draws upon a range of anthropological and philosophical writers (including Deleuze and Guattari) in building his approach to humans’ engagements with the material. He follows Deleuze and Guattari in arguing that form is not the materialisation of human intention, but emerges through interactions between people and materials, proposing that materials are active participants in action and have implications for the shape(s) that the world takes. In particular, he complicates the relationship between objects and materials, and instead of seeing one as prior to the other he argues that the two are interchangeable; one man’s pot is another man’s scrap metal and even when discarded material properties live on, the discard of an object does not strip it of its material vibrancy (Ingold 2013, 19–20). He shifts the emphasis of material studies from the analysis of stable forms, to reflecting upon fluid materials, perceiving a vibrant world in motion, in which materials are intervened with by people, but in which neither has primacy over the world which emerges. Knowledge is not prior to action, but emerges through engagements with material (Ingold 2013, 52), materials do not exist to be shaped by people, but make demands on people to treat them in particular ways (Ingold 2013, 62) and, as we come to know materials, we become able to anticipate their needs and demands and engage with them in increasingly skilful ways (Ingold 2013, 69).

It is in the work of Jane Bennett that many of these strands come together to create a view of material vibrancy that has been increasingly influential within

archaeology (e.g. Crellin 2017). Bennett draws upon a diverse range of scholarship, particularly the writing of Deleuze, in building her analysis of *Vibrant Matter* (2010), in which she demonstrates the ways in which materials flow and how agency emerges from assemblages. In doing so, she questions the very foundations of modern, western, anthropocentric perspectives on the material, exploring the implications of lively materials for our understanding of the roles of humans in the world. She calls on us to pay attention to and tend to materials, and for us to understand the implications not of human behaviour as such, but of our relations with the material, both those which we drive and those in which we are overcome by its force.

Whether driven by our experiences with the material in the laboratory, reflections upon others' worldly realities or mediations on the ways that materials act back, a mass of scholarship has developed dedicated to destabilising the anthropocentric, modern western ontological perspective in the social sciences, and this has been the case in archaeology as in other disciplines, as will be discussed below. Before doing so, however, I wish to briefly reflect upon two key areas: the implications of thinking about things beyond representation and the ethical implications of giving materials their due.

Things beyond representation

If we accept the problematic distinction between nature and culture and wish to further explore the animist premise of vibrant things and materials, it becomes necessary to reflect briefly on the concept of agency. It is worth stating, first of all, that unlike ANT (see below), agency is not a critical concept within assemblage thought. If we trace the genealogy of the term agency it becomes intimately connected with the concept of structure within the writing of Anthony Giddens (e.g. Giddens 1984) and, within a world without structure, agency is arguably a redundant concept. Agency is not an issue discussed by Deleuze and Guattari, nor does it feature in DeLanda's conceptualisation of assemblage theory. Deleuze and Guattari are, however concerned with affect, which is a product of all relations, as Thrift (2002, 87) states, "the assemblage is a means of constructing narrative in such a way that it cannot be subsumed by a simple model of causality". Affect is more than outcome; it is not sensation or perception, for Deleuze and Guattari (1994, 164) affects are beings, they are insidious, having implications for what unfolds next, they are the means through which assemblages come together (territorialise) and by implication are therefore productive as assemblages are generative (see Harris 2016). In a world that is never finished, affect is what links past and future, being both the result and generator of action. Art work, for example, does not just elicit an immediate emotional response, but goes on to "register the world anew" (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005, 89); the affect of the artwork is to open up new ways of becoming, for new worlds to emerge. Importantly, within assemblage thought the thing can be multiple; a stone can be a tool or a weapon (and critically it is both things, rather than representing both possibilities) and the way

that it causes affect is inherent in the ways in which its material qualities are activated through relations. Similarly, the body is always multi-modal, with different bodies (not simply understandings of the body) coming forth in different contexts (Harris and Robb 2012, 676). Agency is not a property of a thing, but rather causality is emergent and such an approach finds similarity with notions of distributed agency found across archaeology and other disciplines. Furthermore, as Ingold (2013, 97) contends, in a conceptualisation of a world in which everything is vibrant and affective, agency becomes an unnecessary concept as everything has it; it, in fact, becomes a conceptual hindrance as it becomes a substitute for examination of what it is about the vibrancy of things which makes particular occurrences happen. However, if we are to approach things as more-than-representational it is worthwhile briefly reflecting on the implications of this emergent or distributed approach for how we approach things as participants in social action, as the concept of material agency has been an important transformative concept in driving the ontological turn within archaeology.

The concept of material agency first entered archaeological discourse in a sustained way through the adoption of Gell's (1998) concept of primary and secondary agents: that is, objects have the capacity to make things happen, but are secondary to human agency. The notion of distributed agency, most commonly derived from the writing of Latour (2005) and other ANT scholars, is fundamentally different in that it sees agency not as the property of any person or thing, but, rather, as a property of relations between them (see Whatmore 1999; Knappett and Malafouris 2008; Van Oyen 2016). Things might be perceived as both the sum of and more than the relations which constitute them. As such, they may play a role in shaping interaction, but also have the capacity to resonate widely through assemblages as those relations, and therefore the composition of the thing, change. Simply put, people and things must act together, they cannot cause affect alone (although materials in relation to one another could potentially cause effect without human participation).

An important step in this regard is the uncoupling of intentionality from agency (see Malafouris 2013, 131–2), seeing both as occurring 'in action', rather than within some form of enclosed human mind. Once we take this distributed approach it is essential that we think in terms of flow and trajectories; of becoming rather than being. Whereas agency might be seen as a property of a being which acts, within a world in flux in which relations are continually forming and dissolving, in which energy flows are critical in bringing things into relation with one another, we see affect emerging from this ongoing process, and having implications as it resonates through a network or connected assemblage. If we return to the concept of animism, we can view animacy as a relational construct, emerging as things act upon one another. In order for this to happen things have to be unstable and changing; be that a human changing with their awareness of the world or iron rusting. Indeed rather than seeking to understand change, it is continuity and consistency which require explanation, as by losing an *a priori* concept of structure we also lose the stability that it brings. What becomes key is the temporality of material

relations (see Mol and Law 1995; further discussed in Chapter 3). We reach a point, therefore, where things become more-than-representational. This is not to say things cannot represent, simply that representation is not the only way that they are engaged in action. As Lambros Malafouris demonstrates (2013, 92), the act of writing is not simply a means of storing information or representing knowledge, it is active as it demands other behaviours, it leads to specific trajectories of action. Furthermore, in his application of Piercian semiotics, Carl Knappett (2005) shows how objects function as signs beyond the symbolic, as contingent on relations, in ways which might manipulate behaviour or make demands; as mediators in behaviour rather than passive mediators. The notion of active material culture has therefore moved beyond the representational; it used to be taken in the sense of things being “symbols in action” (Hodder 1982), but we can now, with our ontological naivety challenged, understand *things* in action alongside us.

Material agency has not been without its opponents. Ian Hodder (2012, 20) seeks to focus on entanglement but maintain a degree of separation between human and non-human and whilst acknowledging the importance of material properties in enabling or constraining action, does not equate this to agency; perhaps because of a decision to not decouple agency from intention (Hodder 2012, 68). Torill Christine Lindstrøm (2015) offers a robust rejection of the notion of material agency. Lindstrøm is, in my view, right to highlight the problems of ‘agency’ becoming a substitute for explanation but, again, equates intentionality to agency in claiming that “only animals and humans have agency proper” (Lindstrøm 2015, 227). This is problematic in a number of ways: it betrays a commitment to a western ontological position, not being open to possibilities of thinking differently and sees agency as a property of an actor, rather than as a capacity of relations. It is for this reason it is perhaps most helpful to think not in terms of agency, but, in the spirit of the quote from Thrift (2002) presented above, in terms of causality. Agency has been a helpful concept in making us alive to the vibrancy of materials and the possible role of things in action, but causality shifts our focus to a process of becoming, and it is that process which is the central concern of assemblage thought.

A risk to humanity?

In acknowledging the importance of things, a critique of new materialist approaches (a general term for the range of approaches which critique anthropocentrism and recognise the importance of the non-human) has emerged in which archaeology has been accused of turning away from the human, indeed John Barrett (2016) goes as far as to call the concern with the material “the new antiquarianism”. Barrett takes issues with the suggestion made by Christopher Witmore (2014) that we should not privilege human-material relations over material-material relations. Barrett (2016, 1684) sticks steadfastly to the modern western perspective in stating that: “living and non-living matter are therefore ontologically distinct”. Barrett is correct to argue that we must understand the historically contingent nature of such

a position, to understand how we got here, however, to state that “the so called ‘return to things’ is more significant, and more worrying, than yet another shift in the fashions of archaeological theory for the simple reasons it has nothing to say about the dynamics of the historical processes” (Barrett 2016, 1685) is, I think to miss the point that history was not made only by humans in interaction with the material. Furthermore, Barrett takes Witmore’s work, which is principally advocating a symmetrical archaeology (see below), as representative of new materialist writing in archaeology, rather than engaging closely with the diversity of archaeological and philosophical writing which might be placed under the banner of new materialism. The environmental determinists may have a point in highlighting the importance of climate or landscape; material–material interactions can have historical implications and in order to identify these we cannot privilege those which only include humans, although, we are likely to privilege those which have tangible implications for them, as we are unlikely to observe others (and indeed these, I would propose, fall outside of our remit as archaeologists).

Ruth Van Dyke (2015, 18–20) also makes a passionate case for retaining anthropocentrism. She argues that, as archaeologists, “the social [should] remain at the centre of what we do”. This statement is problematic, however, as it fails to define what the ‘social’ actually is. This is precisely the problem that Latour (2005) set out to address; without understanding what the social is constituted of the term becomes meaningless, synonymous perhaps with human, but, as Van Dyke (2015, 4) herself claims, “to be human without objects is unimaginable”. To separate the social and the material therefore surely becomes untenable, as one is reliant on the other; it is in the relation between the two that the ‘social’ emerges. Van Dyke goes on to make a number of points surrounding the ethics of collapsing the ontological divide between human and non-human, including the potential for humans to become commodities (2015, 19; *contra* Bennett 2010 who sees such a post-humanist perspective as creating a situation in which marginalised people cannot exist in any *a priori* way below the powerful). It is here, perhaps that Deleuze and Guattari’s writing is particularly powerful, in that their concern with power and the generative nature of society helps to reveal alternative systems and structures of power, both actual and potential, which emerge out of more-than-human relations; power, after all, is derived from relations which extend beyond the human, for example with resources such as food, land and water. Linked to power, Van Dyke also argues that post-humanists discard the issue of intentionality, “we can give everything (or nothing) the same level of intentionality” (Van Dyke 2015, 20). This assumes that intentionality is the property of an entity (be that a person or a thing). Is it really the case that “if intentionality no longer matters, then people with evil intentions cannot be held accountable for their actions” (Van Dyke 2015, 20)? Action is always performed in an environment, in relation to things; to give human and non-human ontological parity is not to strip the human of its humanity, its uniquely human qualities, the ability to think and act, but acknowledges that these actions can only be carried out in relations. Whilst, if we follow Latour (1994) that it is the hybrid of the gun and the person that kills rather than either entity

in themselves, it does not deny that each brings something different to the assemblage, or, indeed, that this process of assemblage makes the murderer, creates the person who can be punished for their actions; “perhaps the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one’s response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating in” (Bennett 2010, 186).

If, as Van Dyke and Barrett advocate, we do continue to privilege the status of the human we must, at least be able to explain *why* we do so and be aware of the implications for the material (Sørensen 2013, 3). Far from preventing us from understanding the complexity of past conditions through the interplay of the living and non-living, a focus on relations allows us to emphasise these complexities, whilst also holding our beliefs lightly as to what we should and shouldn’t view as being alive (or in a broader sense, real) and understanding that human/non-human relations may change over time (Harris and Robb 2012, 668; Sørensen 2013, 9). We might question, for example, in the case of some objects (e.g. jewellery or prosthetics) whether they should be considered a part of the body or as separate entities, and, indeed, whether their ontological position in relation to the body changes with their external relations. That said, the implications should not be to see humans and non-humans as equivalent, but, rather, to appreciate the complexity and importance of entanglements between the two (Sørensen 2013, 4). In doing so, however, we must take care not to fetishise the ‘other’ and reify the modern/non-modern distinction in place of that between living and non-living (Vigh and Sausdal 2014, 56–8; Lindström 2017, 110–12).

The key point here regards ontological purity. If we are wedded to a western modernist perspective then a turn to things must be at the expense of humanity. People and things are bounded and separate entities, and one must be privileged over the other. If we are open to alternative ontologies then we can appreciate the worlds of others and be open to the ways in which relations bring about hybridised achievements of people and things (Sørensen 2013, 11). However, we can never fully inhabit their position as we are inseparable from our own historical contingency, but this does open the potential to reflect on practice and question our beliefs. This can have the effect of removing the human if we are not delicate. To reject representational approaches could be perceived as seeing the object as the meaning and, as such, removes any practice or perception (what we might view as the human element) away from the material world (Sivado 2015, 85). To do so is to caricature the efforts of an approach which is sensitive to ontological imperatives, in which we do not necessarily seek to be entirely non-representational, but wish to go *beyond* representation to understand the implications of relations in processes of becoming, rather than states of being, to adopt approaches which explain change rather than impose stability. As such, we are seeking not to remove the human, but give due weight to the role of things in cultural production and reject representation as the *raison d’être* for the material, to not privilege a particular ontological position but to be aware of potential difference (Paleček and Risjord 2012).

A further concern is that by focussing on relations the things and people themselves are lost. It is here that assemblage approaches have the most to offer. Our

approach is not to see links between discrete things, as in a network, but to understand everything as relationally constituted, to not take our ontological boundaries for granted (Anderson *et al* 2012, 173). We risk losing the human in the sense that the human (as a cultural being) ceases to exist as an *a priori* entity, but emerges through engagement in the world, always becoming and not being constant. As Thrift (2002) discusses, non-representational theory is inherently political, in that it creates new political spaces, in which new kinds of person might emerge through performance. It is the concept of difference which is so central to the writing of Deleuze and Guattari and, by being alive to the radical political purpose of their writing, we can use assemblage thought not to mask the human, but to explore possibilities for alternative forms of knowledge creation, power structures and political discourse; that is, not by simply tracing relations in a depoliticised way, but by understanding the potential for them to cause effect, both in past societies and in the performance of heritage practice today (Russell *et al* 2011; Harrison 2013a). This is the critical point to grasp which links the ontological turn and assemblage approaches: we are dealing in the realms of the possible and the potential, we must place to one side our particular view of the world to understand how this view emerges and its implications for our understanding of the world, to be alive to possibility and difference, which can potentially allow us to move towards a radical view of the past in which we speak of people and things in the evidence's terms rather than our own.

Summary: assemblages, ontology and things

This brief overview has demonstrated a renewed concern with the study of 'things' and increasing awareness of the validity of alternative ontological (as opposed to epistemological) positions. It is proposed that assemblage thought, as an approach which sits in opposition to modernist boundaries and emphasises processes of becoming, provides tools to explore the implications of these realisations for archaeological scholarship. In order to progress we must be alive to the vibrant nature of the material, not necessarily by adopting an animist position, but by being aware of the potential that such an ontology might offer both interpretively and, more importantly from my perspective, methodologically. This forces us to reflect on the active nature of things and to engage in debates over agency, even if such a concept does not sit well with a concept of emergence and also to be clear in our purpose for adopting such positions; not to relegate the human, but to seek different perspectives on a more-than-human past.

Archaeological articulations

In response to this ontological turn, archaeologists have developed a range of approaches based on concepts of relationships and alternative ontological positions, which draw inspiration from a range of different bodies of scholarship. Before shifting our focus to assemblage thought specifically, it is worth briefly reflecting upon

these in order to demonstrate the breadth of the theoretical landscape and the ways in which assemblage based approaches fit into this wider body of work.

Schiffer and behavioural archaeology

One of the first attempts to take the relations between people and things seriously is Michael Schiffer's (with Andrea Miller 1999; hereafter Schiffer 1999) *The Material Life of Human Beings*. What is particularly important about this work is that, rather than taking its lead from sociological, philosophical or anthropological literature, it is a specifically archaeologically formulated theoretical approach, developing out of Schiffer's (1976; 1987) pioneering work on the archaeological process in the 1970s and 1980s. Schiffer's bold aim was to develop a new ontology for the social sciences which gives due attention to the role of artefacts in human behaviour, in particular seeking to understand how objects are more-than-representational. Therefore, his theory of communication is based not on symbolism, but on the properties of things and the ways that they perform in different types of interaction. Schiffer's descriptions of interactions, of a messy room allowing the inference of a particular lifestyle or a tree stump inferring the cutting down of a tree, shows how meaning is contingent and emerges from interaction. It is from interaction that knowledge is generated and transferred; things become constitutive of behaviour by evoking responses, rather than being representational of it. Within such communicative behaviour, the receiver is always a person and, as such, Schiffer's theory is of importance because it acknowledges that whilst we can strive for a 'flat ontology' in which people and things have parity, our perspective is always that of the human; interpretation is, by necessity, anthropocentric. What Schiffer's approach does is to account for the role of materials and things (the non-human) in behaviour and seeks to take seriously the role of artefacts both in archaeological analysis and in behaviour more generally, something which, Schiffer rightfully highlights, is prevented by a conventional ontological position.

Why, then, has Schiffer's theory of behavioural communication not caught on? It is, in my opinion, a revolutionary piece of work which, perhaps, was ahead of its time. The themes addressed in the work and the concepts developed find parallels elsewhere, for example in Knappett's (2005) application of concepts of affordance (performance characteristics) and the Piercian index (contingent signs) and in the current concern with relations and ontological symmetry. One reason is that Schiffer's work is laden with jargon, which he claims is necessary to shed the baggage of conventional terms. Whilst a valid point, his categorisation of types of interactor and interaction can be seen as an attempt at purifying heterogeneous performances (Webmoor 2007, 565–6). However, from an assemblage perspective a critical issue is the focus on communication. By focussing on communication, the approach to the material remains one of representation, albeit one in which what is being represented is not an anthropocentric 'culture' but a materially and socially contingent meaning. There remains an implication that specific meanings are communicated in a linear way, mediated

through material interaction, implying that meaning remains prior to action; that there is a single past which is 'out there' and that we have to trust material informants as somehow more objective than human ones, rather than seeing pasts as emerging through creative engagement with the material in the present. There is undoubted methodological value to Schiffer's approach of empirically reconstructing human-non-human relations and understanding their implications, yet we must take care to avoid replacing one 'objective' ontology (western modernity) with another (an object centred ontology focussed on communication). It is this movement away from a focus on communication and towards concepts of immanence and creative mediation of the past which have been the focus of subsequent approaches under the heading of 'symmetrical archaeology'.

Symmetrical archaeology and Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

In the early 2000s the neglect of the material within the social sciences had been widely noted, and had stimulated the development of 'material culture studies', particularly inspired by the work of scholars such as Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley. Such approaches brought things into the spotlight, but approached them from a western ontological position, in which an emphasis on things as participants in social action in ways which exceed representation or human intentionality is a form of fetishism, in other words objects would always be secondary to humans in social interaction (see Olsen 2007; Olsen 2010). Symmetrical archaeology developed out of critiques of such a perspective, and draws heavily on ANT. It is the latter which has actually gained traction in terms of its application to archaeological work, however the symmetrical critique has been valuable in challenging the prevailing ontological privileging of the human in archaeological practice.

In simple terms, symmetrical archaeology seeks to collapse dualistic distinctions within archaeological practice, by beginning from a position that the human and non-human are not ontologically distinct (Shanks 2007; Witmore 2007; Webmoor 2007). This is not to say that the two are equivalent, but, rather, that one should not be privileged over the other in archaeological work, nor should other distinctions, such as those between nature and culture or past and present be taken for granted. Where this work has the biggest implications is in regard to archaeological practice. Michael Shanks (2007) highlights the way that archaeology does not seek to reconstruct an objective past which is 'out there', but rather is a creative engagement with materials from the past, in which the past is an ongoing process, which has no end point (see also Witmore 2007). As such, the past is not 'recorded' in things and the archaeological record is not representative of the past, rather it is a participant in the mediation on the past in the present. Symmetrical archaeology does not seek to redress the balance between people and things by privileging the material, but instead places an emphasis on processes of mixing and hybridisation, seeing agency as emergent from distributed collectives, taking its lead from a Latourian conceptualisation of object agency, rather than from that of Gell, which is so dominant in 'material culture' studies (Witmore 2007, 549; Webmoor 2007;

see also Jones 2012, 22–4). Developing from a reading of Martin Heidegger’s writing on phenomenology, Bjornar Olsen (2010, 87–8) stresses the need to focus on our experience of things themselves rather than seeing things as merely symbols or carriers of human meaning; after Heidegger the ‘thing’ performs a gathering function, not existing as proxies for human thought and action, but always ready to do something. This means that within symmetrical archaeology people are seen as living with the world, rather than in the world; the emphasis of analysis is placed on connections across space-time and between heterogeneous participants, which include objects and materials which are as able to act upon social processes (albeit in specific ways) as humans. These ideas were expanded upon in the book length study *Archaeology: The Discipline of Things* (Olsen *et al* 2012), in which the case for things is made forcefully and cogently, as being the ‘stuff’ from which archaeological understandings are crafted and the implications of a modernist ontological position masking the role of things is critically assessed. A key contribution of this work is in challenging our understanding of the role of things within archaeological practice; for example in destabilising our assumptions about the ways in which things; be they artefacts or our own records, record and represent an objective past. This is achieved by highlighting the mediatory role of these things in building multiple conceptualisations of past worlds, particularly through the enfolding of time by the challenging of a dichotomous relationship between past and present. Although drawing inspiration from the work of Latour and other ANT scholars, there is space within the symmetrical critique for raising challenges, particularly the primacy of relations over things within an ANT approach, with Witmore (2014, 209–10) highlighting that our aim is not simply to reconstruct relations but to understand their implications for the emergence of multiple modes of existence (see also Harris and Cipolla 2017, 147–8 and their Chapter 8 for further consideration of the relationships between symmetrical and new materialist approaches). It is this area in particular in which, I propose, an approach grounded in assemblage theory has much to offer. Some argue that a symmetrical approach is not representative of a world which is, in reality, asymmetric (Hodder 2014; Hodder and Lucas 2017), however I would propose that such an argument misses a critical point that one of our roles as archaeologists is not to *assume* asymmetry, but to understand *how* it occurs; in other words to begin with a multitude of possibilities rather than have our routes of enquiry blocked by assumptions which stifle creativity and result in a process of “deadening repetition” (Lorraine 2005, 161), to consider possibilities that allow us to break out from a disciplinary milieu “crowded with preconceived ideas, unconscious schemata, and the challenge is to avoid having our thinking over-determined by a dominant Image of Thought” (Frichot and Metzger 2016, 79).

Approaches taking up the challenge posed by symmetrical archaeology have often utilised the analytical tools provided by ANT to address these critiques, particularly in thinking about the distributed nature of agency and the importance of heterogeneous collectives of human/non-human in social action. ANT has been utilised in a range of archaeological contexts, but here I wish to focus on a small number of case studies to highlight the value of its application.

The case for adopting ANT as an approach within archaeology is made particularly strongly in two examples from the archaeology of the modern period. Ronan O'Donnell (2015) applies ANT to the study of enclosure in post-medieval England. Here, ANT is used to demonstrate that previous generalising models which have variously ascribed landscape transformations to particular individuals, environmental conditions or macro-economics, are overly generalising and mask the complex interplay between different actants (an entity or force capable of affecting another entity or force with which it interacts) which is visible at the local level. O'Donnell (2015, 133–4) emphasises that “as human intentionality is examined it becomes clear that it emerges from an assemblage of actors” and that “apparently global actors. . . were made present in events only by local mediators”. A similarly perceptive approach is developed by James Dolwick (2008), who sets it out as a framework for understanding the development of the steamboat in 19th century America. He critiques Cartesian approaches which introduce a division between humans and things by arguing that if we assume human agency or technological determinism that we begin enquiry from the position that we know what determined the development of steamboats, rather than understanding the relations between people, knowledge, technology and the environment through which steamboats emerged *with* society and, indeed, by participating in action, went on to shape it; “in other words, steamboats were socially shaped, just as much as they were socially shaping” (Dolwick 2008, 16). From this position, Dolwick follows Latour in calling for archaeologists to reflect upon what they mean by terms such as ‘social’ and ‘society’, proposing that a ‘social’ archaeology automatically removes the ‘non-social’ from our interpretation and effectively creates divisions and boundaries within enquiry (see also Webmoor and Witmore 2008, 55–6). By exploring the relations between ships and their components, advertising, legislation, fuel, people, terrain and a host of other actants, Dolwick (2008) goes on to develop a symmetrical perspective on steam boat development, in which agency is not purely within the hands of people or ‘society’, nor within the technology itself, but emerges from the process of mixing which being-with-the-world brings about. Within ANT, actants are nodes in networks and the connectors between these nodes are indicative of transformation (or mediation) rather than communication (intermediaries). It is in this critical way that networks within ANT vary from those of more conventional network analysis (Latour 2005, 37). However, in this practical application of ANT and symmetrical archaeology we can, also, see strong linkages with the notion of assemblages; steamboats being assemblages of actants which expand beyond their bounds and are effective upon futures which unfold in unpredictable ways.

An approach grounded in assemblage thought would allow us to go a step beyond, however, not to see places, people or things as nodes, but instead as the flows themselves, with the territories created not being networks of nodes (people or things conceived of as Actor-Networks) but rather as messy entangled assemblages. This is, to my mind, a more effective way of viewing the world in more-than-representational terms as we are never confronted by the static state that a network of joined nodes implies.

This is not to say that ANT should not be applied within archaeology. Indeed, although the focus of this book is assemblage thought, throughout I develop an approach which, although ultimately inspired by the writing of Deleuze and Guattari, seeks to find parallels with other approaches such as ANT where they are perceived to have analytical value. In the case of ANT this value is most apparent in the study of material culture, and is perhaps best exemplified in the work of Astrid Van Oyen (2013; 2015a; 2015b; 2016) on Terra Sigillata pottery in the Roman world (Figure 1.1). Traditionally this type of pottery has been seen in representational terms, as well exemplified in the detailed typological catalogues of forms and the common perception of the pottery as a single type, reflective of Romanised lifestyles. Van Oyen demonstrates how through different performances (production and consumption), in different parts of the Roman world, this single archaeological category is revealed to mask complex entanglements and processes of becoming, and seeks to ask how Terra Sigillata became a category, rather than accepting its *a priori* existence as a single type of thing. The approach does not deny that types might stabilise, but focusses on the performances, be they archaeological research, repetitive manufacture, long distance trade or consumption practices, through which this process occurs – Van Oyen stresses how, as Latour (2005, 27) puts it, “there are no groups, only processes of group formation”, and considers how these processes are, themselves effective beyond pottery itself. She shows, for example, how it is from these practices that agency for other processes, such as those linked to urbanisation (Van Oyen 2015b), might emerge through performances which cut across scales and lead to unpredictable events. In simple terms, she reverses our position from seeing Terra Sigillata as representative of the Roman world, to understanding its role in making this particular reality, both in the Roman period and, critically, in modern analysis. This work, like that of Dolwick, seeks to fulfil the ambition of a symmetrical archaeology, in which meaning emerges through material engagement both in the past and the present and across scales, to create a past mediated through things, rather than to reveal one represented by them.



FIGURE 1.1 Fragment of a Terra Sigillata (Samian) bowl. Metropolitan Museum of Art (Accession Number 17.194.2073).

Hodder's entanglement

The themes of entanglement and temporality occur repeatedly in contemporary archaeological literature. These ideas were developed by Ian Hodder (2012) in *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships Between Humans and Things*, and further in *Studies in Human-Thing Entanglement* (2016) in ways which are both productive and controversial. Hodder, like Schiffer before him, is keen to emphasise the importance of relations between people and things and, in particular, the importance of material properties for social relations, that is acknowledging the vibrancy of the material. In developing a theory of entanglement, Hodder (2012, 18) seeks to demonstrate how things enable, constrain, and are relied upon in human action, with there being ties of dependency between people and things; that is that people need things and things need to be cared for by people. This is the key point elaborated on in his later (2016) work, and perhaps the most significant contribution of Hodder's approach; that things draw people into obligations which limit the potential futures which might emerge. I wish to discuss three elements of Hodder's work: firstly the emphasis on materiality, secondly the concept of dependency and, thirdly, Hodder's critique of the application of ANT and symmetrical approaches within archaeology.

By focussing on material properties, Hodder makes temporality a key cause for concern. Things persist because of (or, in some cases, in spite of) their material properties and are a medium through which the past becomes enfolded in the present. In doing so, small things can have big effects, by directing evolutionary behaviour or interrupting in ways which may be disruptive. This comes across particularly in Hodder's (2016, 20–24) discussion of path dependency (the idea that the path which the future takes is directly determined by actions and decisions made in the past). However, unlike within symmetrical archaeology, time retains its linearity, whilst the past has implications for the present, these take the form of 'steering' rather than disruption; entanglements may afford change or continuity and small interactions drive wider developments. The emphasis is, therefore, on using the idea of entanglement as a metaphor for exploring a linear past. Rather than being a means of creative engagement, there remains a degree of objectivity; the aim is to account for the role of materials within a developmental narrative, rather than considering the implications of multiple temporalities for the emergence of multiple or alternative pasts in which the relation between past and present remains ambiguous. This has three important implications. Firstly, there is a teleological element to Hodder's writing, the implication being that we are on a path of increasing entanglement. A second, and related point, is that Hodder's writing takes towards a consideration of a totality of entanglements, a tracing in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, of relations which allows us to consider their outcomes as they appear to us, including those which may be unintended, but, at the same time, not creating space for multiplicity and contradiction. Finally, there is a concern in Hodder's writing with seeking 'origins', for example of inequality (Hodder 2016, 75) or of settled life (Hodder 2016, 20), in his words: "as an archaeologist I am interested

in when this headlong flight into things. . . began” (Hodder 2016, 20). This carries with it the assumption that these phenomena emerged in a linear way, an idea which is critiqued strongly in recent literature (Shyrock and Smail 2011, 6–8) and is in contrast to Deleuze and Guattari’s writing on assemblages which focusses on the middle as the object of analysis; an acknowledgement that tracing the earliest is less important than understanding the processes out of which specific circumstances emerged.

Within this linear conceptualisation of time, process is critical to understanding entanglement, and Hodder (2012, 49–50) argues that it is in processes of assembly that affordances emerge, as the product of relations. A particularly valuable notion is that of entrapment, in which things make demands on people, for example in arresting decay to allow a building to remain habitable (Hodder 2012, 67). Here we can clearly see how things are effective upon people and how material properties have implications for people which go beyond representation and communication. Things, therefore, have a primary agency, they can exist without humans, but not necessarily in the ways that humans want them to (Hodder 2012, 69). Similar ideas exist within the writing of Deleuze and Guattari in the form of smooth and striated space and coding (see Chapter 2), means through which the flows which constitute the world are ordered and potential processes of assemblage blocked which are critical to understanding continuity and persistence.

Hodder’s work brings valuable insights to the melting pot of relational archaeologies, but he also levels critique at ANT inspired approaches. In particular, he is concerned with the ontological flattening of the distinction between people and things, arguing that it is necessary to retain a distinction because certain material properties are overlooked due to a focus on sociological issues (Hodder 2012, 93). Because within ANT everything is social, the material is always social and the temporality of things, such as processes of material decay, are lost. This is an important point, although one which is well countered by the contention that symmetrical archaeology is not about making human and non-human equivalent, but simply giving them ontological parity (Olsen and Witmore 2015, 189–91). It is about recognising that those material properties have social implications, that those are the specific properties of particular actants, just as humans possess certain properties not found in the material world. Perhaps a key distinction is that in ANT the focus is on understanding the implications of connections, whereas Hodder is as interested in understanding how connections come about. However, this refusal to fully collapse the dichotomy between people and things has a critical implication in regard to agency; that is that agency becomes a property of a particular thing or person (and, in the case of people, becomes associated with intentionality) rather than emerging from a collective (Hodder 2012, 216). Whereas for Hodder assemblages might afford possibilities, it is either humans or things which have primacy over determining how those affordances are realised – entanglement becomes a power play as people and things trap each other in social action, rather than power being distributed across the assemblage. This has an important implication for thinking about past dynamics; is power brought to the assemblage or does it emerge from

it? For Hodder (2012, 214), power is “the differential flow of matter, energy and information through entanglements”, it becomes an ever present flowing through relations and the role of things is to erode or enhance power differentials as a specifically human property. Power is explored more explicitly by Hodder (2016, Chapter 5), in which he argues that people become trapped by obligations, as increasing entanglement with things “produce unexpected problems that need fixing” (Hodder 2016, 75). Yet, whilst Hodder is seeking to employ entanglement theory in a political way, specifically within the context of the Anthropocene, his writing focusses more on alerting us to the material element of humanities challenges, than exploring ways in which power structures might be broken down and changed. There is an acceptance that entrapment is difficult to overcome. This is in contrast to Deleuze and Guattari’s writing which is concerned specifically with alternatives, how existing power can be broken down and shaken up – including that which emerges out of the material realm. In following Deleuze and Guattari, therefore, we might think in a different way and see power not as flowing through relations but as emerging from them, something which is only possible if the ontological distinction between human and non-human is collapsed. This is how we can view power as emerging within assemblages, as structuring relations in ways which are only possible if we are prepared to loosen the ontological primacy of the human and accept that power is not internalised but is distributed through relations. It is this concern with the internal and external which is critical within work under the associated body of work termed Material Engagement Theory.

Material Engagement Theory and Process Archaeology

Whereas the approaches discussed so far take the neglect of things in previous scholarship as their starting point, Christopher Gosden and Lambros Malafouris (2015) begin with the concept of process and place the problematic notion of representation in their cross hairs (see also Malafouris 2013). An emphasis on processes of becoming and the emergence of form not as a pre-conceived notion, but in dialogue with the material finds close parallels both in the writing of Deleuze and Guattari and Ingold (2013). Indeed, they identify that an interest in becoming, rather than being, is a central feature which binds together many approaches within archaeology and the social sciences (Gosden and Malafouris 2015, 702). Gosden and Malafouris do not make any explicit statement about their ontological commitment to the division between people and things, but, like those scholars influenced by ANT, see engagement as key to process; form and meaning emerge not from any one entity but in the relation between people and things. Other dualisms do, however, face critique, most noticeably that between mind and matter, with the two being argued to be indivisible as ideas, intentionality and knowledge, as well as material form, emerge from process and material engagement, rather than being the property of people or materials. Like symmetrical archaeology, therefore, their Process Archaeology does not argue for any form of equivalence between humans and non-humans, but does argue for giving their contributions equal weight, even

if their role within interactions is differentiated; it is not people or things which act, but hybrids (or assemblages) of the two. With an emphasis on process comes an interest in temporality and the idea of historical contingency is critical; that futures emerge from pasts, not towards any directed 'end', but through creative engagement with the material. The implication, although not explicitly stated, is that, as with symmetrical approaches, ideas of the past also emerge from material engagements with archaeological evidence, again leading us to question the correspondence theory of truth (a means of linking thought and things through facts that assumes that the truth of a statement is determined by whether it actually relates (corresponds) to the world) and the representational nature of material culture in archaeological analysis, as well as in past societies. The lack of directionality to human history, but also its shaping by past events, is an important concept within assemblage theory, particularly in the way that it is formulated by DeLanda (1997) and in this emphasis on process and engagement, links with the core concepts of assemblage thought described in the next chapter are clear. This is not to say that time does not progress, but that lived time is "a kind of continuum, as successive but overlapping presents fuse into one another" (DeLanda and Harman 2017, 129). Furthermore, in seeing both identity and objects as processes in themselves we are called upon to develop an idea of a world in motion, in which meanings emerge from action with processes of becoming, emphasising the formative, rather than representational, role of material engagement.

Critiquing representation is the major aim of the related approach developed by Malafouris (2013) termed Material Engagement Theory (MET). For Malafouris human cognition extends beyond the body, with agency, intentionality and meaning all being distributed through material engagement, with the human condition being characterised not as one of being, but of becoming. Like the other bodies of work discussed here, Malafouris (2013, 14) argues that things "should not become a passive substratum of society" and that their role is more-than-representational. Indeed, what is particularly notable about Malafouris' approach is that he tackles the question of representation in a direct way, proposing that things can be representational, but that the inscribing of meaning is not without implications; writing, for example, changes how we engage with the world and does not represent the world as it is, but changes the processes of which it is constituted (Malafouris 2013, 69). The ontological distinction between human and non-human is partially collapsed within this conceptualisation of the world, in as much as human-ness extends beyond the body, being defined through the relations that people have with the world; biology and culture shape each other through an effective intertwining, rather than being ontologically distinct categories (Malafouris 2013, 46). We find in Malafouris' approach to representation some parallel in Schiffer's analysis of behaviour and communication, in that the meaning of signs might be contingent on their materiality. However he also emphasises that there is a critical difference between understanding how signs work in the world, and how they came into being and acquired their symbolic force (Malafouris 2013, 96); in other words he does not deny that things can be representational, but does propose that signification should

not be ontologically prior to objectification. Meaning and communication are not the purpose of things, but emerge as capacities of them as they are integrated into the world. A further key element of Malafouris' work is the uncoupling of ideas of agency and intentionality. Whilst the question of material agency is addressed within symmetrical archaeology, the question of intentionality is not adequately theorised and remains a major point of critique of ideas of material agency; how can things have agency if they cannot think? For Malafouris agency and intentionality are related but distinct concepts and, furthermore, are neither the property of people or things, but rather emerge through engagement – human action is guided and constrained by the material, intentionality emerges through material engagement; for example the material has implications for the forms that an object might take or the ways in which it may be used (Malafouris 2013, 149). Material Engagement Theory and Process Archaeology both, therefore, place an emphasis on processes of becoming, seeing meaning not as internalised within the human mind, but as distributed through interactions with the world. Intention, agency and affordance are all relationally constituted as people and things do not reproduce a mental world in the material realm, but rather work together to mutually constitute mind and matter.

There is, therefore, much which links the rhetoric of symmetrical archaeology and the more explicit conceptual framework of Material Engagement Theory, and both find close parallels with assemblage thought in the way that they place an emphasis on interaction and the emergence of causality and meaning. Together they alert us to the need to take things seriously, to not entirely write of representation, but to see the material world as more-than-representational, and also to consider the ways in which futures emerged from pasts and how our pasts emerge from material engagement in the present.

Applications of non-western ontology

Whereas the development of social and archaeological theory provides us with new tools with which to approach the past and pose research questions, other scholars have gone further, to seek to examine the ontological realities of past societies through archaeological evidence. Such approaches allow us to explore the multitude of ways in which worlds come in to being and potentially create more culturally sensitive and realistic archaeological narratives. Scholars have approached the question of understanding ontologies in different ways and here I focus on two core strands: exploring the implications of material experience and the use of analogy.

As archaeologists have become more aware of the possibilities offered by an appreciation of object or material agency, it has been possible to deepen our perspectives on the implications of the material for action. Taking the material 'seriously' is a common aspiration of archaeologists adopting relational approaches and what this means in essence is seeing things as more-than-representational. Representational approaches typically prevail in the study of objects which might be perceived as

'art', however, when critiqued through a non-representational lens these things have the potential to reveal alternative ontological possibilities. This has been the case in the analysis of the Chumash rock art from the southwestern USA discussed by David Robinson (2013) (Figure 1.2). Robinson critiques the notion of rock art as a simple representation of stories of past trance states, to instead argue that the art is implicated in processes of transformation through which ideological relations are cemented; their production and ongoing integration in social discourse was central to particular futures unfolding. A further example is Mary Weismantel's (2013) analysis of the Chavín stones, carved monoliths dating to 1000–300 BCE and situated in the Chavín de Huántar temple in Peru. In her analysis, Weismantel focusses on the material experience of the carvings, the ways that the stones impose on the viewer and how the carvings demand particular forms of ocular and haptic engagement, which impact upon the experience of the viewer, forcing them to relate to the stones in particular ways and having implications for the viewer's sense of temporality. Furthermore, the faces depicted on the monuments are explored from a perspectivist position, in which they do not represent but have the capacity to see – allowing “an intense perceptual exchange with non-human entities they knew to be animate and agentive” (Weismantel 2013, 32), which was the purpose of pilgrimage to the temples. A similar emphasis on the sensory sensations of encountering things is put forward in an interpretation of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns by Ruth Nugent and Howard Williams (2012), who comment on the ways in which the incised decoration demands sensory engagements which are both ocular and haptic (Figure 1.3). Furthermore, they consider the implications of eyes depicted on the urns as providing a sense of seeing, although they do not go as far as to suggest that the pot and the cremated body become one, with the pot acting as a medium through which the cremated person might continue to see the world.

An awareness of indigenous ontologies allows us to collapse the problematic distinctions between practical and ritual, or sacred and profane which are so problematic within archaeological practice (Brück 1999). A ground-breaking study in this regard is Pauketat's (2013) *An Archaeology of the Cosmos*. By writing an archaeology sympathetic to the relational ontology of native American societies, Pauketat is able to put across a radical re-interpretation of Mississippian monuments such as Cahokia which do not trivialise phenomena such as astronomical alignments, but rather see a cosmological understanding as essential to their planning (Pauketat 2013, 130–31). Religious practice, therefore, does not exist in some way outside of everyday life, but emerges as a process of living with the world at multiple scales, what Pauketat (2013, 165) terms a “series of nested, reiterated, transferred and translated bundles”; religion was not imposed on settlement spaces but emerged (as knowledge, rather than belief) with them, through the formation of reciprocal, dialectic relations with other animate participants in everyday life. Religion is therefore “about living one's cosmology” (Pauketat 2013, 182) and this means that it is about understanding ontological difference, not just using things or monuments as epistemological props. This ontological openness permits us to reveal the non-human participants in change and also to understand how past populations



FIGURE 1.2 Chumash rock art – Polychrome transomorphic design known as Blue Boy at Three Springs, California. Image: David W. Robinson, reproduced with permission.

lived with their worlds, in ways in which knowledge had implications for the futures which unfolded (Pauketat 2013, 190).

Perspectivism is utilised by Benjamin Alberti (2012; 2013) in his analysis of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic pottery from first millennium CE Argentina, in order to collapse the Cartesian dichotomies between nature/culture and body/soul.

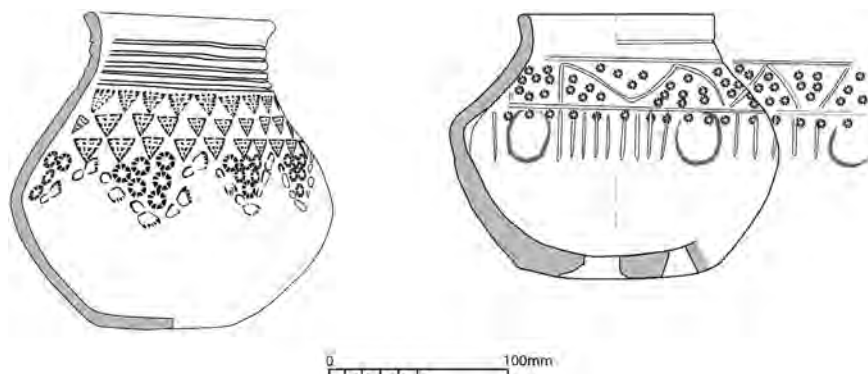


FIGURE 1.3 Anglo-Saxon cremation urns from Spong Hill, Norfolk and Cleatham, Lincolnshire. Image: Nugent and Williams (2012). Redrawn and simplified by Howard Williams after Hills and Penn (1981) and Leahy (2007), reproduced with permission.

He proposes that these pots do not represent bodies, but rather are crafted as bodies, with processes of painting, piercing and pinching finding parallels in the processes of crafting human bodies through the application of jewellery, body paint and tattoos. These pots have traditionally been interpreted as ‘spirit traps’, but Alberti proposes that these do not function as traps in the sense of being containers, but rather because the body and the spirit are one within Amazonian ontology that it is the process of making the body in clay, the manipulating of materials, which traps the spirit in the material form. This is a radical position which demands us to re-consider the role of these objects within past societies, to understand them not in the terms of a human/non-human dualism but, instead, as bodies with implications, which emerge with the world through the relational constellations which they enter in to.

It is in considering these relational constellations that we are drawn back to a consideration of assemblages. Many studies draw together elements of relational approaches from modern western scholarship with ethnographic analogy. This has been particularly the case in studies of prehistoric ontologies, which have led to a destabilisation of our understanding of Neolithic society in particular. In a cross-cultural analysis of Neolithic Europe, Andrew Jones (2005) proposes that the Neolithic is not a single entity, but, instead, a set of processes within which multiple forms of Neolithic personhood emerge out of processes of being-with-the-world (see also Swenson 2015 for a related perspective in an Andean context). This idea is developed by Daniella Hofman’s (2013) analysis of the ways in which categories of object and being can be seen as fluid, both in the Neolithic period and in our modern analysis, proposing that within the Linear Bandkeramik (LBK) culture humans and other beings were not necessarily ontologically distinct, but also that a single Neolithic ontology did not exist, with understandings of the realities of the world developing through the ongoing unfolding of Neolithic life. Similar approaches have been developed for other periods, for example for the

Mesolithic Chantal Conneller (2004) has critiqued the representational interpretation of deer antler frontlets found at the site of Starr Carr (Yorkshire, UK) to argue that they were worn not as simple costumes, but, instead, as a means of blurring the boundaries between human and deer, allowing people to ‘become deer’ by adopting some of their qualities and characteristics (Figure 1.4). For the Iron Age the relations between people and animals are also explored by Adrienne Frie (2016), who highlights that seeing animals as a ‘catch all’ category is problematic, instead emphasising the need to explore the ways in which people and animals related to one another to better understand boundaries which emerged through, and were relevant to, past practices. Methodologically a focus on assemblages can, therefore, allow us to understand how past worlds were constituted relationally (Zedeño 2013, 117; Pauketat 2013). Critically, we need to be alive to the various ways in which relational understandings of the world might emerge, rather than seeing a single form of non-western relational ontology existing (Jones 2005; Field Murray and Mills 2013; Zedeño 2013).

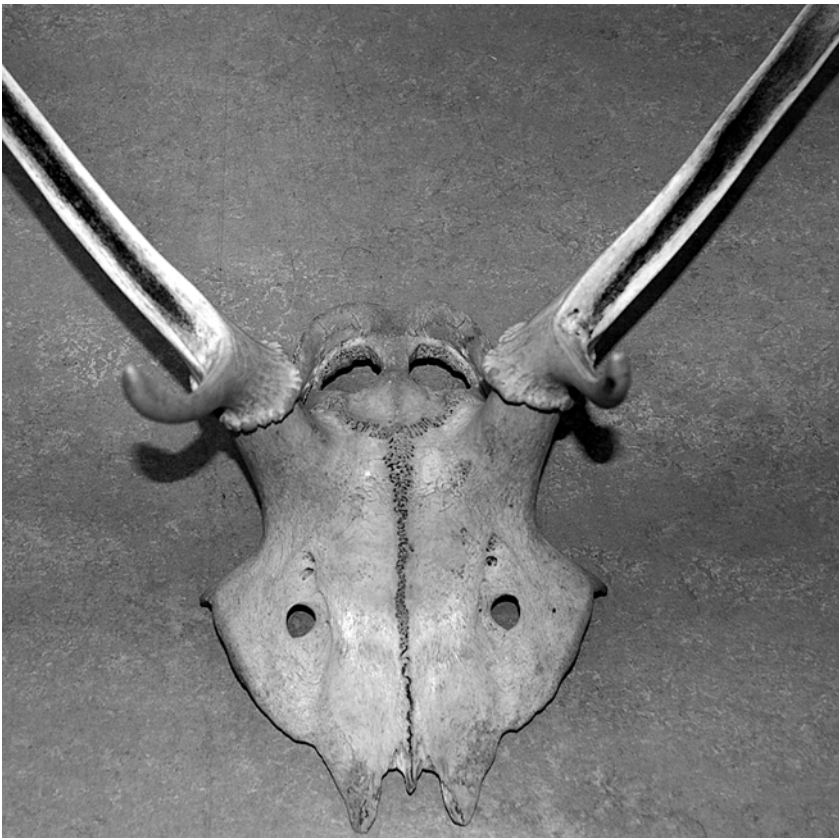


FIGURE 1.4 Modern replica of the antler frontlets from Star Carr, produced by Ian Dennis, Cardiff University. Image: Ben Jervis.

Such approaches are not unique to the study of prehistoric cultures, or those societies who can be explored through analogy with descendant groups. A recent analysis of Anglo-Saxon ironwork (Welton 2016) demonstrates through an analysis of objects and a consideration of contemporary literature how things were perceived as having lives and qualities, and how their characters were intimately linked to their material properties (see also Lund (2017) for a similar approach also within an early medieval context). We can see, therefore, that exploring alternative ontology is not simply an identification of material agency, it demands an understanding of processes of interaction; be that the manipulation of materials into bodies, tactile interactions with monuments, the ways in which things are drawn into assemblages or the implications of materials for social interaction. My aim in this book is not to dwell on the question of ontology in the sense explored in these studies. However, I believe that assemblage thought, with its emphasis on process and ideas of becoming, provides a useful framework for understanding the interplay between people and things in the past and may offer a means to explore potential alternative ontologies (relational or otherwise; see Wilkinson 2013), whilst also allowing us to consider the complex relations brought about by working across time, with multiple things and also with ideas; analogy, after all, is a form of relation in which ideas from elsewhere are brought into an archaeological assemblage. Therefore, assemblage thought offers a means not only to reflect on relations in the past, but also upon the ways in which relations in the present and the past have implications for each other. It is this complex interplay with temporality which, for me, marks assemblage thought out from the other approaches introduced here.

Applications of assemblage thought

Applications of assemblage thought as developed by Deleuze and Guattari remain relatively rare in archaeological study. It has principally been utilised in two ways: firstly, alongside ANT, to critique the archaeological process (e.g. Lucas 2012a) and, secondly, to address archaeological questions, particularly within the field of British prehistory. The methodological and practical implications of assemblage thought are discussed in the closing chapter of the book, so here I focus on the use of assemblage thought in interpreting archaeological evidence.

The key role of assemblage thought has been to explore ways to dissolve dualisms in archaeological research. Particular examples of this are Hannah Cobb's (2016) analysis of Mesolithic assemblages and Oliver Harris' (2014) exploration of the concept of communities. Cobb begins her argument from the position that the relations between Mesolithic people and their surroundings have not been adequately considered, with depth and complexity being lost in the lurch from environmentally deterministic approaches which characterised scholarship in the 1980s and subsequent post-processual analyses which emphasise the human. By using assemblage thought, beginning from a perspective of a flat ontology in which neither society nor the environment are ontologically prior to action, Cobb shifts focus to the ways that the Mesolithic developed as an entanglement of relations

between a variety of participants including humans, plants, animals and stone. By focussing on relations it becomes possible to shift focus from defining the Mesolithic to exploring processes of becoming in which both people and the environment have a stake as the culture/nature divide is dissolved. This is an approach which has fruitfully been applied to the study of the Neolithic as well (Jones and Sibbesson 2013) and shows how we cannot view any 'society' or period as a bounded category which is ontologically prior to action, but rather as a bundle of historically contingent, messy unfoldings which conventional archaeological analysis homogenises and packages into neat groupings. By collapsing these dichotomies space also opens to rethink key concepts, such as community. Harris (2014) expands the definition of community from being groups of people which are somehow bounded through proximity or social interactions, to be a bundle of people, things, animals and other components bound through action, which are processual in the sense that they emerge from and work to constitute particular performances (or behaviour), creating a situation in which humans do not have primacy but, rather, are a part of relational communities. Such an approach is clearly symmetrical in that it sees humans and non-humans as ontologically equal, but not necessarily as equivalent with each other, but distinctive in that it sees the community as a continual, fluid, unfolding, rather than as a defined network of relations.

Burial archaeology in particular lends itself to assemblage analysis as graves can be clearly perceived of as bounded assemblages, consisting of components which exceed these boundaries, as they are also components of other assemblages or networks (Jones 2012, 136; see discussion of an Anglo-Saxon grave in Chapter 2). Perhaps the most developed example is Chris Fowler's (2013) examination of burial assemblages in early Bronze Age north east England, which draws on assemblage thought, as well as the writing of Barad and ANT scholars. Temporality is a critical component of Fowler's research, which explores the ways in which Bronze Age artefacts are drawn into particular assemblages through archaeological research, and come to be particular things as certain relations are revealed. Rather than seeking to homogenise and generalise burial practices, Fowler instead focusses on process, highlighting the ways in which different but related forms of burial performance emerged, linked to the transformation of the body, and reflects upon how our understanding of this process is shaped by the relations which constitute archaeological research. Fowler's work is multi-scalar, exploring the composition of grave assemblages as well as the landscape situation of burials. Rather than beginning with a set of assumptions, and seeking to place graves into particular traditions, Fowler allows themes to emerge from the assemblage; scale is defined through relations as individual objects may become deterritorialised into larger assemblages of similar objects, but also fall into small scale, local performances in burial practices (Fowler 2013, 221). Rather than seeing a homogeneous and idealised Bronze Age culture, what emerges from Fowler's study is a bundle of interactions (or intra-actions in Barad's terms), some drawing on past interactions, others being improvisations, through which the assemblage which we identify as 'early Bronze Age burial' emerges – rather than this set of practices as being ontologically prior to

action, either in the past or in present archaeological analysis. We find close parallels here with Andrew Jones and Emilie Sibbesson's (2013) conceptualisation of the Neolithic and Cobb's (2016) analysis of the Mesolithic; rather than burials being reflections of cultural beliefs, they become integral to the performance, transformation and negotiation of worldly experiences and create opportunities for us to map a wealth of other connections beyond the grave from which a particular perspective on Bronze Age society might emerge. As Rachel Crellin (2017) demonstrates through the study of Bronze Age burials on the Isle of Man, we shift from seeing the past as a series of bounded 'packages' to a continuous unfolding, a process which is folded into the present as things and materials from the past mediate our engagement with it (see Shanks 2007; Jones 2012, 70).

My own work which applies assemblage thought to archaeological analysis is focussed on a different set of evidence; exploring its implications for the study of medieval towns, material culture and identity. Again this work is concerned with exploring and dissolving dichotomies between urban/rural (Jervis 2016a) and between medieval/modern (Jervis 2017a) and seeks to explore the implications of materials for the historically contingent unfoldings of more-than human communities (Jervis 2017b; Jervis 2017c). These themes are picked up in the subsequent chapters, which represent the results of my personal engagement with assemblage thought and other related ideas.

Summary: variations on a theme

All of the approaches discussed here draw upon similar suites of ideas, albeit derived from a number of different bodies of literature: anthropological, philosophical, sociological and archaeological. What distinguishes them is their emphasis; in the case of symmetrical archaeology on the role of things and in Process Archaeology on the concept of process for example, and also their commitment to collapsing ontological distinctions. Within symmetrical archaeology there is clear commitment to collapsing the ontological primacy of the human, whilst in his behavioural archaeology, Schiffer argues for the anthropocentric necessity of archaeological research and retains a distinction in methodological, if not interpretive terms. Hodder argues that a degree of asymmetry is required to account for the distinctive properties of people and things. The problem here is, perhaps, in critiquing western modern ontological purification another ontological position has to be adopted. In some cases it is appropriate for that position to be one derived from an indigenous group, or one inferred from a reading of the archaeological record. Adopting a flat ontology requires us to let go of our assumptions and come to terms with the vibrancy of materials and the potential for humans to not have primacy in social interactions, which we always have to view from the human perspective. A subtlety is, however, that in letting go of western modernity temporarily we are not denying that it can exist, but are simply acknowledging that it has to be *shown* to exist and *shown* to be relevant; we should not make *a priori* assumptions about the primacy

of humans, but rather our evidence has to demonstrate this primacy. Furthermore, as an analytical tool, acknowledging the potency of materials and reflecting upon their implications for society gives us a richer and deeper understanding of the complexities of past life, the conditions with which people lived and the ways in which worlds do not emerge in a pre-formed state, but out of processes, and are always becoming in multiple temporal registers (both in acknowledging that societies may develop in unpredictable ways and also that pasts are not represented in archaeological data but rather emerge from creative engagements with it). The breadth of archaeological literature and its emergence from a number of positions and bodies of inter-disciplinary literature demonstrates a clear concern with addressing issues of ontology and of becoming. My aim here is not to stake a claim by developing a further body of theory, but rather, to propose that the approaches found within assemblage thought provide a methodological and ontological framework for practising a more-than-representational archaeology, and that assemblage approaches are flexible and multi-faceted enough to allow us to draw upon these archaeological approaches to produce an approach which is something of a bricolage of ideas, much like assemblage thought itself.

Towards Assemblages

In using assemblage thought it is necessary to state my own view on the ontological implications of the various approaches outlined above. Firstly, I propose that we should not assume human primacy in social interactions but also that humans and non-humans are not equivalents; they are variegated assemblages in themselves, with their own capacities, affordances and qualities. I do not believe that this need be at odds with Hodder's insistence on *maintaining* certain ontological distinctions, but requires an extra step, to explore how these distinctions emerge rather than *assuming* their existence, leading to an understanding of the implications of these different qualities as assemblages form; in other words these distinctions require a level of justification which might emerge out of an analysis focussed on assemblages. Secondly, I agree with an emphasis on mobility and process and believe that this is a critical concept within assemblage thought, that we should not seek to make the world less complex, but rather to experiment with understanding the complex ways the world (or worlds) might take place (Greenough 2010, 50). As such, things must be seen as more-than-representational. That is not to say that they cannot have a representational role, but that we need to appreciate that representation is not without implications, and that meanings are malleable and unstable, shifting with material engagements and shaping the ways that futures and pasts might emerge. Thirdly, by seeing assemblages as bundles of human and non-human components, each themselves assemblages, we can explore interaction across and between; we cannot see connections without things, nor things without connections. A focus on relationships does not mask things in themselves, but, rather, allows us to problematise their instability and their implications.

Summary

This chapter has sketched out a number of approaches which have been developed by archaeologists in response to an ontological turn perceived of across the humanities and social sciences. It has been shown that the impetus for this turn has come from multiple sources, including ethnographic study, Science and Technology Studies and philosophical challenges to Cartesianism. Assemblage thought, the subject of this book, is one of a suite of approaches. It can be narrowly defined in terms of the application of the writing of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as of DeLanda's interpretation of this work, to archaeological research, or more expansively as taking a lead from this writing, but drawing upon other related, but not identical, approaches. It is this latter definition which is pursued here. In the next chapter the key tools which constitute assemblage thought within an archaeological context are defined and I then go on to explore how these can be applied to the study of material culture (Chapter 3) and urbanism (Chapter 4). The book concludes with a reflection on the wider implications of assemblage thought to archaeological and heritage practices (Chapter 5).

2

FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSEMBLAGE TO VIBRANT ASSEMBLAGE

The genealogy of assemblages

Assemblage is a familiar concept to archaeologists. It has featured in archaeological discourse since at least the 1950s and, with its usage accelerating from the 1960s and 1970s, particularly following the work of David Clarke (1968) and the turn to a more scientifically focussed archaeological practice (see Hamilakis and Jones 2017). In general terms, the word ‘assemblage’ is most commonly used to describe a group of artefacts from an archaeological feature or a group of similar archaeological materials (an assemblage of pottery, metalwork or monuments, for example).

Its usage here derives from a different genealogy, the ‘assemblage theory’ developed out of the writing of Deleuze and Guattari by scholars such as Jane Bennett (2010) and Manuel DeLanda (1997; 2006; 2016). Assemblage thought is not a unified body of work, but might itself be considered an assemblage of ideas and concepts, some of which can be put to work in the addressing of particular archaeological questions. Indeed, this bricolage of ideas and influences is apparent in the work of Deleuze and Guattari themselves, which the authors encourage the reader to navigate their way through, rather than reading it in a linear format. The use of the word assemblage is, in fact, something of a linguistic accident. It is a loose translation of the French term *agencement*, which could equally be translated as ‘arrangement’. Whilst to the non-archaeological reader this may have little pertinence, the use of the term assemblage gives this body of a work a particular resonance to archaeological practice (Hamilakis and Jones 2017, 80). It is useful, however, to bear this alternative term in mind as its use, in the sense of a working arrangement, highlights relations as ongoing processes rather than representing something static (Anderson *et al* 2012, 175; Buchanan 2015, 383), indeed Thomas Nail (2017, 22) goes as far as to dissociate these ideas from the conventional understanding of the English word assemblage so as not to lose the dynamic processual nature of the core idea. As discussed in the previous chapter, this body of work can

loosely be bound to other approaches which share certain similarities; an emphasis on relations, a symmetrical approach to the human and non-human and a de-centering of anthropocentric approaches to agency, which have emerged as the result of an ontological turn in the social sciences.

Before progressing to explore the various concepts which characterise assemblage thought we can reflect on the implications of the use of the term assemblage in archaeology, particularly in the sense proposed by David Clarke, for our engagement with this body of philosophical literature. For Clarke (1968, 188), an assemblage is “an associated set of contemporary artefact types”, types being “an homogeneous population of artefacts”. This definition immediately raises two issues which assemblage thought brings to the fore. The first is the concept of an assemblage as defined in relation to a type. As Gavin Lucas (2017, 188) discusses, Clarke’s scheme is a hierarchical one, in which different levels – the artefact, the type, the assemblage – sit neatly within each other. To perceive of an assemblage as a collection of heterogeneous artefacts would “threaten the integrity of the whole system” (Lucas 2017, 188). Such an approach, Lucas argues, limits our view of assemblage to a model of containment, not allowing spaces to explore relations between artefacts along an axis of enchainment, that is the way that an assemblage might form as a set of artefacts associated with each other (such as a group from an archaeological context) (see also Harris 2017a).

The second issue with Clarke’s definition is his use of the word ‘contemporary’. As Lucas (2015) highlights, contemporaneity in archaeological practice is typically associated with a linear progression of time. This poses two questions. The first is how do we define what is contemporary in a linear scheme? This could imply a co-existence, or the presence of similar or identical objects within a particular period of time, defined either by a technique such as seriation or through the arbitrary process of periodisation. The second is the question of how objects from the past might irrupt into the present, to form new associations. The persistence of materials means that they cannot be neatly boxed into a particular temporal period. Old objects remain in the present, for example as heirlooms, or re-emerge through practices (archaeological excavation being the most obvious example). The world, as Nigel Thrift (2002, 91) suggests, is a:

kaleidoscopic mix of space-times, constantly being built up and torn down. These space-times normally co-exist, folding into one another, existing in the interstices between each other, creating all manner of bizarre and unexpected combinations.

Whilst not part of an assemblage in Clarke’s sense, these objects do form ‘enchained’ relations with other objects. Drawing on assemblage thought therefore allows us to explore the relationships between these different axes of relations, between like things (which are, in fact materialisations of relations of processes such as skill and knowledge development) but also the associations which form between things, for example through their combination in the performance of certain practices.

Chris Fowler (2017, 99) demonstrates that there are elements of Clarke's assemblage which have a resonance with assemblage thought inspired approaches. Clarke (1968, 191) saw artefacts as consisting of a bundle of attributes and highlighted that it is the relationships between these attributes which define particular types and might reveal elements of contact or influence. These attributes shared between types are important for an assemblage thought approach as they show the existence of relations, be they interactions with objects, the sharing of knowledge or experimental interactions with materials. Where a schism emerges is in Clarke's approach to these shared attributes as representational, although he does understand society as constructed of the formation of particular relationships between people, things and environments. Within an assemblage approach these relations are more-than-representational, these are not passive movements of influences but the result of affective engagements between people and materials. Although there is a representational element to these interactions, they are also practices which instigate occurrences and events. Whereas an archaeological assemblage is an ordering of materials, an assemblage in the sense discussed by Deleuze and Guattari is an affective process of gathering – it is this gathering which drives society. Therefore, whilst an archaeological assemblage is effectively static, a Deleuze-Guattarian assemblage is necessarily processual. Therefore, a fundamental implication of assemblage thought for archaeological practice is grappling with this shift from seeing archaeological objects or deposits as possessing some form of essence, being what they are, to viewing them as ongoing processes, as always becoming something (Witmore 2013, 139).

The assemblage

Imagine if you could watch the world unravelling through space and time. You would see a series of flows of matter, energy and ideas; people, objects and materials. These flows can become entangled, or arranged, in an infinite number or ways. It is this process of arrangement which is the assemblage. Therefore assemblage is a productive process, entities emerge out of it. Assemblages are not static groupings but dynamic processes – assemblage approaches foreground ongoing processes of composition, rather than thinking about things as stable wholes (Anderson *et al* 2012, 172). The temporary coming together of these flows is a process termed by Deleuze and Guattari as 'territorialisation' (Key Concept 1). As flows become territorialised into entities, the potentials which can unfold are limited, the flows become 'coded' (Key Concept 2). However, flows can also become entangled elsewhere, a process of deterritorialisation, and these same processes might lead to flows becoming de-coded, creating a broader range of potential becomings. Thinking with assemblages therefore requires a challenging shift of perspective, from thinking about the world as composed of objects and substances, to one composed of events and processes (DeLanda 2005; Bryant 2012, 532; Nail 2017). The assemblage is an event, a process of transformation.

KEY CONCEPT 1 Territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation

Assemblage can be thought of as a process of gathering, through which components are brought together to constitute an entity; as a temporary confederation of relations. This coming together is the process of territorialisation, through which intensive processes come to be defined in extensive terms. Any component of an assemblage can, simultaneously, be a component of another assemblage, and this process of movement, of overflowing, is deterritorialisation. Deterritorialisation is a productive process, as it causes assemblages to have implications for each other; these components, which might cross scales, can be understood as assemblage converters. Reterritorialisation is the process through which those components function within their new assemblage, potentially as a means of persistence. We might think about a Bronze Age burial mound, deterritorialised into an assemblage of Anglo-Saxon burial through monument re-use. The mound itself is deterritorialised, enfolding time, presencing Bronze Age practice in the early medieval period. The mound is reterritorialised into the assemblage of Anglo-Saxon burial, standing for the Bronze Age practice and having implications for how the Anglo-Saxon burial assemblage unfolds.

KEY CONCEPT 2 Coding, de-coding and over-coding

Coding is the process through which flows are given order. Coding might occur from any sort of processes; from the imposition of rules and regulations to the impact of climate on navigation. De-coding is the process through which those codes might be broken down whereas over-coding describes the ways in which coding is over-written gradually. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari describe the ways in which feudal hierarchy and other forms of power structure are a means by which the flows of goods and wealth, and ultimately desire, are coded, to limit their disruptive potential and bring continuity. They describe how the circulation of money and goods served to break down this coding with, ultimately, capitalism over-coding these structures, creating a smoother space across which desire might be actualised in a multitude of ways. Capitalism, they (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 259) assert, is “defined not solely by decoded flows, but by the generalized decoding of flows, the new massive deterritorialisation, the conjunction of deterritorialized flows” . . . “the decoding of capitalism has freed, deterritorialized and decoded the flows of code . . . it is not machines that have created capitalism, but capitalism that

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creates machines, that is constantly introducing breaks and cleavages through which it revolutionises the technical modes of production". As such, the idea of coding and de-coding is useful for understanding persistence and change, as it creates opportunities to understand the gradual breakdown of some social norms and the persistence of others, to see power over the future not solely in the hands of 'the powerful' but as emerging out of behaviour across scales, where minor changes or micro-scale persistence, might have implications for the formulations which can emerge in the future.

The flows are what Deleuze and Guattari term rhizomes, and they move across a conceptual space. They are what Deleuze and Guattari term a Body without Organs (Key Concept 3), free flows of potential, entirely unformed, existing on a 'plane of consistency'. The space of this plane is smooth, there are no limits on the potential processes of assemblage which might occur. Such a situation is of, course, unrealistic. Past action always codes these flows, giving them some form; the space is, in fact, striated, potential is limited because what might emerge is to a certain degree historically contingent. There exists among these free flows a potential energy which causes relations to form between these flows. This potential is desire (Key Concept 4);¹ it might be perceived of as "a ceaseless, flowing and active force that helps us find new [possibilities] that exceed the bounds of our current cultures and social forms" (Neu *et al* 2009, 32). Critically within assemblage thought, this desire is not a 'lack', but a productive force, it is the production of intensities (Gao 2013, 410). Territorialisation is not the process of gathering through which things (as flows) become joined up, but rather, that through which they become joined with each other (Ingold 2016); they form something new and in doing so they cause affect, they actualise the potential of desire as a form of power. Coding, the way in which space is striated to limit the possibilities and forms of power might emerge, can therefore be understood as means through which desire can be managed and constrained.

KEY CONCEPT 3 The Body without Organs

The Body without Organs refers to the free, unformed flows that possess the potential for production. It is common to use the metaphor of the Body *with* Organs to think about things as defined entities, made up of connected component parts. The Body *with* Organs is extensive; it has a defined limit. In contrast the Body *without* Organs is intensive; "it is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree – to the degree corresponding to the

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intensities produced" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 178); it is the "connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 187); in other words, it is not closed but open to the matter which surrounds it. Critically, the Body without Organs forces us to switch from thinking in terms of representation to production, to understand form as immanent, as emerging from intensities – as effect. If we think of the world as constituted of unformed flows it is always in a process of becoming. By allowing archaeological objects to become Bodies without Organs, they do not represent the past but are constitutive of pasts; by thinking about settlements as Bodies without Organs they are not reflective of a society but a series of intensities that can be mapped. Therefore, methodologically, the concept of the Body without Organs challenges us to work from relations and to understand what they produce, to adopt a process of mapping, rather than to begin from known, bounded entities (a process of tracing).

KEY CONCEPT 4 Desire

Assemblages were first described by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* as desiring machines. In their work desire is a productive force, which "constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects" and "causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 16). Their concept of desire is different to that defined in the common usage of the term as a lacking. The Body without Organs and desire can be equated, they are the stuff of assemblages, the impulse which draws flows together (Gao 2013, 415). Desire therefore results in movements of territorialisation, of gathering. Coding exists to constrain that desire, to limit the forms which might emerge. Rather than seeking causality behind the forms that do appear, desire perhaps causes us to ask why certain forms didn't emerge; in the writing of Deleuze we should expect difference not consistency as society is productive; desire drives this production and social order, repetition and continuity can therefore be understood as a resistance of desire. This turns our usual ways of understanding the past, as a linear series of events, around to force us to see the world as endlessly becoming and makes continuity, rather than change, the key phenomenon of the past which must be explained.

Assemblages are also termed by Deleuze and Guattari as "desiring machines"; "desire is . . . inseparable from complex assemblages, and assemblages are passional compositions of desire" (Gao 2013, 414; see Gao 2013 for a consideration of the development of desire in the writing of Deleuze). They are not static entities,

gatherings or accumulations, they are the process through which desire is converted to affect (see Chapter 1), arranging the flows, sorting them into entities, what Deleuze and Guattari term strata. Stratification is the sorting of flows, a process which striates and codes flows, creating entities (Key Concept 5). Space then is a mixture of what is captured, the sedentary and mobile (or nomadic) forces (Lysen and Pisters 2012, 1) (Key Concept 6). Gradually, through processes of deterritorialisation, these strata are de-stratified, smoothing space (or over-coding it), creating new potential. By making assemblages the focus of study, therefore, we are not simply describing processes of accumulation, we are seeking to understand a process of transformation and its implications.

KEY CONCEPT 5 Stratification and de-stratification

Stratification is the process through which flows are sorted and then cemented to create particular entities. For Deleuze and Guattari they are different to assemblages; whereas assemblage is the process of arrangement, strata are “acts of capture” they “imprison. . . intensities” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 46) – the difference between strata and assemblage can be understood as one of perspective and focus; strata allow particular molar entities to exist, assemblages allow us to focus on molecular process. For DeLanda (2016), strata are a strongly coded and strongly territorialised form of assemblage, sitting at one end of the spectrum which stretches to the opposite, the plane of consistency (unformed and uncoded flows). De-stratification is the process through which strata are pulled apart. If we perceive of strata as territorialised and coded, then de-stratification is both a process of deterritorialisation and de-coding. Methodologically we can perceive of strata as our starting point, allowing us to follow ‘lines of flight’ which de-stratify that object of enquiry, as it is deterritorialised (drawn into productive relations with other things which cause it to exceed its bounds) and de-coded (allowed to operate in less constrained ways); in effect our intervention with that object becomes an intensive process, in which that object is implicated, changed, but is also affective.

KEY CONCEPT 6 Smooth and striated space

Rather than thinking of space as a container for action or as the product of society, we can think of space as immanent, as “always real but not always actual”, as formed in the flows which constitute the world (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005, 89–90). We might think of this space as smooth, in which flows

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can move in an unconstrained way, or as striated, in which historical action has constrained the possibilities that might unfold. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 557–60) describe the sea as a smooth space and the city as a striated space; we can move across the sea in any way we like, but the city is constrained by streets and by rules. In reality spaces are a mixture of smooth and striated; the sea became striated by navigation for example. However, it is in the smooth space that we can see the Body without Organs operating, as the spaces in which new forms are produced, which might work to smooth striations and create new possibilities for the world (see Horvath and Maicher 2016, 42–3).

Flows and events

Figure 2.1 is a drawing of a maiolica jug from Tuscany dating to c1490–1510, excavated from a site at Upper Bugle Street in Southampton. The vessel has a tin glaze and is decorated with a blue and yellow heraldic medallion, with a purple and turquoise handle and a monogram below the handle (Brown 2002, 86). This jug has the appearance of a static, stable entity. Ordinarily we might see this vessel as a substance – an entity formed out of matter (clay) which exists as a distinct object (Bryant 2012, 531–2). It has properties which it takes with it, it might stand for particular ideas and represent certain processes.

If we follow Clarke, artefacts are compositions of attributes, which can be grouped into types and assemblages. The approach proposed here requires a shift in

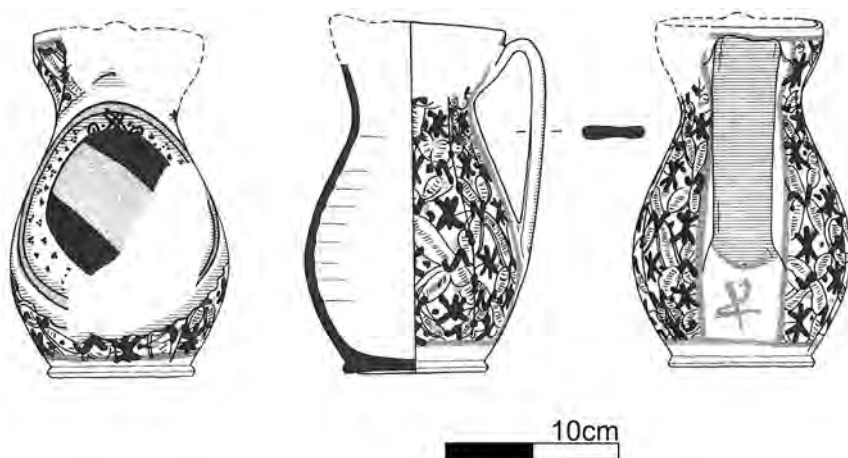


FIGURE 2.1 Florentine maiolica jug from Upper Bugle Street, Southampton. Image drawn by Simon Griffin and reproduced by kind permission of Duncan H. Brown.

how we view these attributes. Rather than simply being static elements of things, each becomes processual; they are, themselves, an assemblage. Objects as assemblages are more than their material properties, they are confederations of materials, ideas, knowledge, skill and are defined through relationships; the assemblages of which they are a part. Critically, these accumulate within objects, meaning that whilst always immanent, always available to be drawn into other assemblages which might have implications for their ontological status, they are also historically contingent, shaped by historical processes of gathering through their production and use. What we have to place to one side is a notion of the stable 'thing', to instead view the object as flowing into and out of relations and as a composition of flows, held together by the temporality of the materials themselves (see Chapter 3).

What happens though if we think about the pot in this way, as an ongoing process, as an actualisation of virtual capacities (Key Concept 7) – capacities not essential within the vessel but as actualised through the relations which constitute it as an occurrence? The pot is not defined by its internal structure, but by its external relations – it becomes affective not because of its essential properties but because of the way it becomes instigated within productive assemblages. Relations of exteriority are a defining characteristic of assemblages – they cannot be reduced to their constituent parts, it is the relation between these parts which is critical; as through these relations the capacities of these components become activated as qualities (Anderson *et al* 2012, 179; Robinson 2017, 166). Things, we might think from this position, do not possess qualities, just as they do not possess agency, but rather its qualities are the effects brought about through a process of actualisation; we need to realise that what we see as effect is an illusion, which masks the pot as a process (Bryant 2012, 536). Anything which we might view as a property of the pot; its colour (the relationship between surface and light), its texture (the relationship between material and the body), its meaning (a whole web of relationships) are, in fact, activities, the effects of processes, the outcomes of relations expanding beyond the pot itself and therefore finite, limited by the temporality of the relation. The pot becomes a patchwork of ongoing relations, unstable and provisional, never fixed and not reducible to a bounded whole (Deleuze and Parnet 1977, 41; Anderson *et al* 2012, 177). Focussing on assemblage allows us to reveal how these qualities emerge and how they might have implications.

KEY CONCEPT 7 Capacities and affect

Affect (in Deleuze and Guattari's terms) and capacities (in DeLanda's) can, in simple terms, be defined as what an assemblage can do. Capacities exist as potential, which is actualised through processes; whilst materials have properties, they only become capacities when those materials are drawn into other

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relations and that potential is activated. David Robinson (2017) discusses capacities in relation to Chumash caches from southern California, arguing that the capacities of materials in relation to food storage and processing permitted particular ways of life, causing objects to be valued and repaired to retain the capacities emergent from relations with them. Such an approach takes us further than arguing that the meaning of things is contingent on their context. As the product of relations capacities emerge with ways of life, and, as such, allow objects and materials to operate in ways, to generate affect, in some contexts which they do not in others; making capacity analysis a valuable means of using assemblage approach to tackle issues of ontology by being alive to the ways in which different relations with the material may lead not to it being understood differently, but to it being differently.

I do not wish to dwell here on the making of the pot, indeed the relation between form and materials is discussed in depth in the next chapter. We might, however, think about the ways in which this pot is the product of an enfolding of space-time; “space and time are not containers within which events take place . . . rather (they) are brought into being simultaneously with the actualisation of a given phenomenon” (Greenhough 2010, 41); “the world itself is an event” (Dewsbury 2000, 1915). The pot is thrown, a skill acquired through the undertaking of apprenticeship, passed on through generations of potters, a flow of knowledge generated through repetitive material interactions. The maiolica technique was imported into Italy through links with the Islamic world, whilst the heraldic motif may suggest that the vessel was commissioned by a particular household, or is a generic motif which relates to a wider heraldic culture. Through the manufacture of this vessel multiple relations, dispersed through space and time, come to the surface. The vessel is not just an immanent unfolding, but an irruption of processes of learning and encounter, knowledge transfer and commoditisation into a present. It is the product of a process of repetitive interaction with the material, rather than a process of replication (see Jones 2017, a point also central to Deleuze’s writing). Already we can see how the pot is not a static bundle of relations but an accumulation of links, an enfolding of space-times through the performance of technological practice.

To think about our pot as event, it is helpful to adopt Jane Bennett’s (2010) notion of vibrant matter, and to follow Deleuze and Guattari in seeing entities as having a molecular composition. Molecules are unstable, they are drawn into interactions and relationships, meaning that the stuff of which any assemblage is formed is constantly in flux. In this case the molecules relate both to the physical material of the pot, and also the wider associations which constitute it as an entity in any given moment; its relations for example with other domestic utensils with which it is joined. It is this molecular quality which gives assemblages the “living, throbbing”

character described by Bennett (2010, 23–4); assemblages are never static, they are coagulations of flows (which, by definition, are always in motion). There is not a single pot, there are multitude of potential pots and as flows are territorialised these are actualised into an affective pot. The pot itself is what Deleuze and Guattari term “molar”. Importantly, the terms molar and molecular do not simply equate to the macro- and micro- (being more a question of perspective), but rather every scale is a mixture of the molecular and the molar (Saldanha 2010, 285–6). The pot is a molar entity, but is also a molecule in other molar constellations, and the molecules themselves might be viewed as molar compositions as well. Therefore, the form of a molar entity is not entirely determined by its molecular composition, but also by the way it is deterritorialised and reterritorialised as a molecular entity into other assemblages (Key Concept 1), defined both by its relations of interiority and its relations of exteriority. The elements of the pot, its materials say, are defined by the properties that are activated through a particular process of assemblage (e.g. the pliability of clay in manufacture, thermal shock resistance in use, its ability to be sourced in analysis), and whilst a component can be removed from assemblage and plugged into another, it becomes something else as different capacities are actualised, cascading on to have implications from the larger entity of which it is a part (e.g. as the ability for clay to be chemically sourced is actualised so the pot becomes something else, an archaeological object defined through its emergence in narratives of medieval trade). The pot is defined by its components; the materials, the skills and knowledge behind its production, its biography, but also by the way that as a pot it acts within other assemblages; as archaeological artefact, as possession or as commodity; the capacities of an object or material can, potentially, be infinite because there are innumerable other entities into which they can be drawn into relations with (Robinson 2017, 160). Not only is it constituted of these relations, but these relations are also transformative; as a molar entity the pot is both susceptible to outside forces but also acts upon the relations into which it is drawn. The pot then is not the stable material entity it seems. It is a composition of relations, a process of actualisation and as it causes affect it is an assemblage. Critically, it is not the pot as material entity which is actualised, but its affect; the material pot is of less consequence than what the pot does.

We have, within the archaeological toolkit, concepts which can help us to talk about this process. The strategy of artefact biography, following Igor Kopytoff (1986) and applied in archaeology from the late 1990s (Gosden and Marshall 1999; Mytum 2010; Joy 2010; Martin 2012) provides a means for seeking to capture the ways in which objects are encountered in different contexts, acknowledging that we can view the same object in multiple ways depending upon the context of encounter. Here though, the focus remains on the object as a distinctive material entity, in which its material and cultural characteristics remain somehow separate; the writing of a ‘cultural’ biography implies that objects are inert entities onto which meaning is inscribed (Jones *et al* 2016, 126) and, if we do not take care, we end up with biographies which are not alive to the vibrancy of the material being described. Recently, the concept of biography has been critiqued (Joyce and Gillespie 2015; Jones *et al* 2016). Biography is seen as a strategy for humanising things, for seeing objects and

people as sharing analogous life courses. This, I propose, is more an issue with the practicalities of writing biographies of archaeological objects which inevitably have to start at their point of manufacture or deposition and work from there in a linear manner (see Jones *et al* 2016, 126), than being a fundamental issue with the concept itself. It is also proposed that biography does not adequately deal with periods when objects are ‘at rest’, for example following their deposition in the ground. Rosemary Joyce and Susan Gillespie suggest a complementary approach, the object itinerary, in which we can map the relations into which objects fall, to understand how these interactions are both historically contingent, as things enter relations on particular trajectories (discussed further in Chapter 3), and also affective, potentially causing the thing to change and for other things to change in relation to it. Importantly, this approach allows us to perceive of the object as existing in multiple realities, but in a way in which these exist in and of a single reality and are therefore effective upon each other, rather than effectively existing as a vessel with multiple, unconnected, personalities; what Andrew Jones *et al* (2016) term “multiple objects”.

This approach sits well with a perspective on the world derived from the writing of Deleuze and Guattari. In their writing the world is in flux, it is formed of flows, which may congeal or separate and become entangled in various ways which are effective. Because flows come from somewhere these entanglements are historically contingent, with processes of entanglement causing flows to be manipulated and exit relations in unpredictable ways. From this perspective they propose that we should not see social relations as a tree (as arborescent), growing upwards from the root and branching off, a process of linear growth in which we view society as a whole not growing in a predictable way, but as rhizomes, as random, fluid entanglements which extend across space time. Rhizomes are constituted of plateaus, vibrating intensities without “any orientation towards a culmination point or external end” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 23). If we view our pot in this rhizomatic way its future becomes unpredictable, it has potential to become other things. Biographies can be seen as exploring how things reached this point of culmination, being arboreal, whereas itineraries can be seen as more equivalent to the rhizome, as focussed on understanding the unfolding relations and their implications. The concept of itineraries is also powerful because it allows objects to exist in multiple modes, as territorialised into multiple assemblages, able to cause affect in a variety of directions.

Our pot likely reached Southampton on an Italian merchant ship. Italian merchants established themselves in Southampton to avoid paying tolls in London and imported a range of goods into the port, including pottery, dyestuffs and oil, exporting English cloth to Mediterranean markets (see Ruddock 1951; Platt 1973; Hicks 2015). We can see how the pot did not, therefore, flow freely, but flowed across a space striated through these performances of economic and political activity. The vessel was used in a wealthy household, believed to be that of Robert Machado, a diplomat and important political character in 15th century Europe (see Watson 2016). Its capacities for use exist in relation to other participants in the household and the pot did not pass from static state to static state, but took place through relations which also caused it to have affect; it was for example a component of

the bricolage of capitalist relations which had implications for economic development. In the household it formed a part of an assemblage of other goods, including Venetian glass, imported foodstuffs and local products, being enrolled in the performance of household life through which virtual capacities for social negotiation through consumption activity were actualised. Here the vessel was a component of multiple assemblages; of household goods, of imported products and of pottery from Tuscany for example, with all of these interactions coming to the surface in different ways as it passed through interactions. The path to early modern capitalism did not grow arboreally from medieval commerce but emerged from the coagulation of small scale interactions such as this (Jervis 2017a; Jervis 2018), change not being directed towards a pre-conceived system but as gradually accumulating in and through relations between the molar and molecular. Therefore, the pot is more than its material form, it is something which is multiple in and of itself, it exists in multiple registers, through multiple relations of exteriority, which may have implications for one another. It is too simplistic to see the pot as just a pot, or as a status symbol, or as an intermediary in the performance of mercantile capitalism, it is all of these things and more, but only becomes visible as such through certain interactions, certain movements of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Deterritorialisation took the pot elsewhere, into new assemblages. Reterritorialisation into those assemblages allowed it to persist, to act as itself whilst also being transformed, taking a single material object into multiple sets of relations through which it was able to persist, whilst also turn into multiple other things. Thinking of the pot as multiple therefore creates opportunities to understand objects as multi-faceted, as diffracted flows, and to grapple with the complexities of a reality in which things are not orderly or discrete, but messy and unruly.

Eventually the pot was disposed of, apparently as part of a process of house clearance. It was excavated in 1976 and went on to be analysed (Brown 2002). Through this process, elements of different relations surfaced. Scientific analysis reveals its chemical relations, analysis of its context reveals its links to Roger Machado and his life, it becomes an archaeological object, a display piece, it circulates in literature. It did not emerge from the ground devoid of relations, although some were lost, they resurfaced through analysis, the object having the capacity, when placed into particular relations, to reveal some stories and conceal others.

Theoretical developments in archaeology through the 1990s in particular demonstrated that it is overly simplistic to see objects as types, acknowledging that they change with the relations which they enter in to. An assemblage approach allows us to take this further in two ways. Firstly, rather than simply changing in relation to context, the object is constituted of these relationships; it is nothing without them and does not change in relation to them but changes *with* them. Certain relations linger, whilst others change or are lost. Secondly, and linked to this, as assemblages are processes of processes, these changes are not unique to the object, but rather relations are affective, causing change to occur across scales (Harris 2017a). Critical to this is the concept of deterritorialisation; the ways that relations overflow any boundary imposed upon them. It is to this concept we can now turn.

Deterritorialisation, reterritorialisation and affective relations

Whereas in Clarke's (1968) scheme assemblages are one part of a hierarchy of sorting, assemblages in the sense discussed here are multi-scalar. Any assemblage is formed of other assemblages, what Manuel DeLanda (2016, 14), following Fernand Braudel, terms "sets of sets" or what we might think of as processes of processes. However, we should not fall into the trap of seeing these sets as neatly nested in a hierarchical manner, but rather as overlapping confederations of relations which extend across scales; these sets of sets are perhaps best perceived of as something akin to a series of Venn diagrams than a set of stacking cups. Furthermore, any assemblage might, simultaneously, form a part of multiple other assemblages. In his analysis of two prehistoric burials from southern England, Andrew Jones (2012, 128–36) shows, for example, how the burial process assembles a heterogeneous mixture of materials, artefacts and food remains, each with their own processual histories and bundles of associations which cause the burial assemblage to overflow its bounds. This arrangement is not a simple hierarchical one, as wider entities which assemblages form a part of, or the elements which constitute an assemblage, might impact the ways in which the assemblage in question develops. Indeed, for DeLanda (2006, 10) it is this exteriority, the relations beyond the assemblage, which are critical.

Archaeological deposits are the result of processes of gathering (Lucas 2012a, 198–203). They are assemblages formed by the pulling together of heterogeneous components. This process of gathering pulls together components from different places, which have emerged along different trajectories and transforms them into something else. As such, as well as being an assemblage in itself, each component is a component of other assemblages. Therefore, any assemblage is a territorialising process, but is also deterritorialised, causing entities to overflow their bounds, with implications which might be affective across scales or vast distances. These may have implications for how an archaeological deposit itself, as a territorialisation of things from different places, finds meaning but also creates opportunities for thinking about how assemblages might 'explode' as we map these different paths to reveal the complex relations which ultimately result in deposition (for a visual representation of this see Gillings and Pollard 2016, 555). Joshua Pollard (2001) shows how these life histories are important, with the relations that have sedimented within things potentially coming to the fore as new relations are formed in depositional acts, or placing demands on how a particular object should be treated. The concept of historical contingency and its implications for the structuring of relations is discussed in more detail below. First, we can use a case study to think about deterritorialisation and its implications.

As an illustration of this concept we can focus on a single archaeological assemblage, Grave 20 from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Great Chesterford, Essex (Evison 1994) (Figure 2.2). This burial contained a female aged 15–25 with a number of grave goods: a bronze cruciform brooch, a bronze small long brooch, a collection of glass and amber beads, iron keys, a bronze wrist clasp, an iron knife and several other iron and copper alloy fragments. This grave is a clear example of an assemblage of assemblages. The grave itself is a territorialised assemblage. Each object is an assemblage, whilst some of the fragments of metal are presumably compositions of objects

of which organic elements have decayed. The beads are objects in themselves, but also a part of a necklace. The individual can also be considered an assemblage, their identity or selfhood being formed of distributed relations which accrued and were affective throughout her life. The objects gathered here were intentionally placed with the body to construct a particular bundle of relations, a composition of the human body, objects, memories and ideas, cemented through the burial rituals (see Williams 2006). We can view this assemblage as a stratum, a collection of territorialised entities, cemented through the process of burial, although gradually overtaken by the materiality of the objects and materials which continue to decay long after the burial has been forgotten. Following Deleuze and Guattari, we can de-stratify the grave by following trajectories of deterritorialisation, effectively using these objects as a starting point for exploring the affective relations, the sedimented

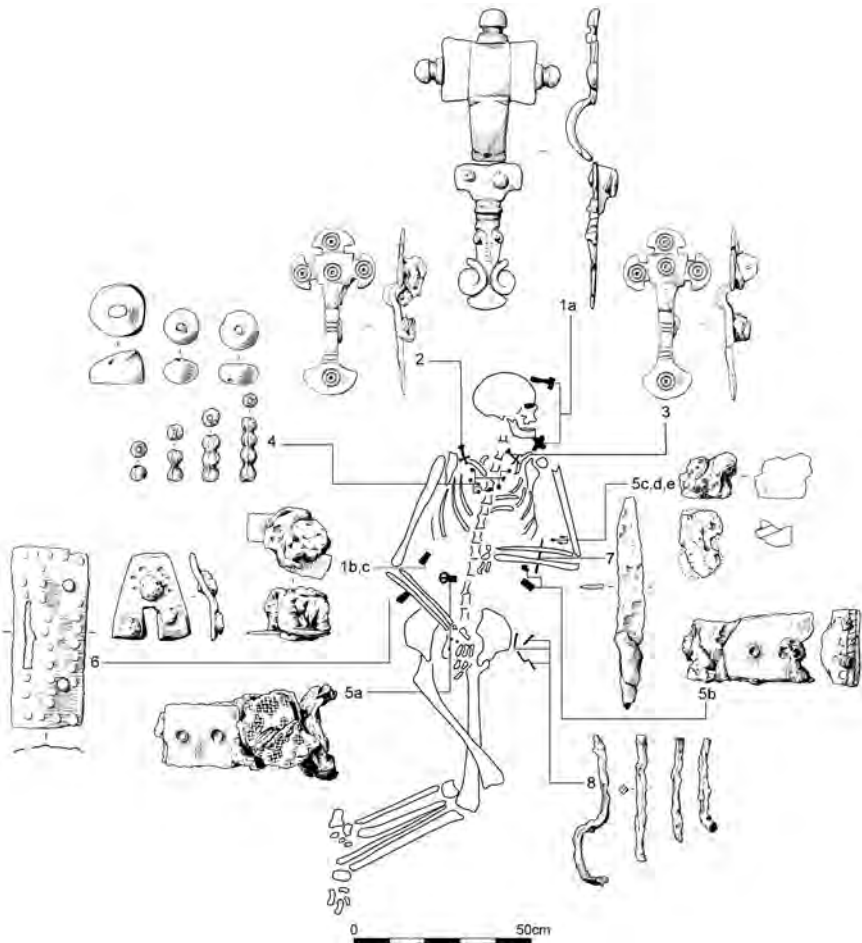


FIGURE 2.2 Grave 20 from Great Chesterford. Artefacts not to scale. Image: Redrawn by Ian Dennis (after Evison 1994).

histories of these objects and this person, which are territorialised in the grave (see also Harris 2017b). Due to issues surrounding excavation and storage little can be said about the biography of the female herself. Her remains show no evidence of cause of death, the only visible trauma being post-mortem (Waldron 1994, 60).

The most striking object in the grave is a cruciform brooch, which shows evidence of repair, with a rivet being used to re-attach the catch-plate and bow (Martin 2015; record 979). These objects have been the subject of a recent study by Toby Martin (2015), which we can draw upon to consider the processes of territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation mediated through this object. We can begin by thinking about the archaeologist's encounter with these objects, and the ways in which, upon excavation, they enter into relations through the process of 'working on the past in the present', through which archaeological knowledge is generated. Excavation is a process of deterritorialisation, in which the brooch is quite literally pulled from the burial assemblage to enter into other relations. Through archaeological research it is reterritorialised to form a new assemblage; the brooch transformed by relations of exteriority, whilst also persisting as an item with a particular biography. It is entered into relations with historical texts, such as the writing of Bede, these brooches, along with pottery and other forms of material culture, coming to be seen as symbols of ethnic identities (Martin 2015, 162). The brooch remains a component of the grave assemblage, but deterritorialises it, circulating within narratives of migration and identity work, with implications for how the role of burial rituals is perceived of in the present. Through the work of Martin (2015) and other scholars such as Howard Williams (2006), the brooch and others like it are pulled into other associative relations, with bodies of social theory, with computer packages which enrol them in the emergence of other forms of knowledge, revealing the potential for these objects as having mnemonic qualities; they circulate as particularised (Fowler and Harris 2015; after Barad 2007) (or "black-boxed", to use Bruno Latour's (2005, 39) term) ideas, as specific types of things, but also continue to be affective as they flow through relations, becoming actualised in different modes; to follow Barad they are both particle and wave, defined and fluid, depending upon how they are encountered (an idea explored in further depth below). The cruciform brooch is not a single type of thing, but exists in multiple modes defined by the relations which it (or ideas of it) are entered into. By being pulled into assemblages of narrative creation which are less about brooches and more about social relations and dynamics, these brooches serve to deterritorialise grave assemblages, taking them beyond themselves as they are reterritorialised into a range of different pasts which are not awaiting discovery, but emerge through mediations with brooches and other items as remains of past actions.

Through a close study of the use-lives and burial of cruciform brooches in Anglo-Saxon England, Martin (2015) shows how the biographies of people and brooches are entangled with each other. Evidence of repair, such as that seen on the Great Chesterford example, shows ongoing relations between users and producers. Metalworking was probably an itinerant craft and Martin (2015, 130) proposes "these skilled individuals (were) integral to the production and reproduction not only of material forms, but also of the social institutions that their products embody".

These brooches are not taken as symbols of identity, instead, Martin (2015, 192) proposes that brooches are constitutive of the personhood of their wearer, drawing the individual into a bundle of relations which might define particular forms of femininity. Interaction with brooches drew women into pan-European networks of power and consumption, mediated relations between living and dead, having a mnemonic role which came about through the wider associations folded into the individual, community and burial process within which the brooch, as a more-than-representational object participated (Martin 2015, 191–2; Williams 2006, 78). Martin (2015, 230–1) identifies that these brooches are most commonly interred with older women, with the brooches relating to the status of these women within a community. The Great Chesterford example is unusual, being associated with a younger woman. Nick Stoodley (1999, 221) suggests that the transition into adulthood was an important one in the life of early Anglo-Saxon women, and that this transition need not solely relate to biological characteristics. It is conceivable, therefore, to see the deterritorialisation of the brooch as making it affective in the emergence of a particular form of female personhood, associated with emergent power structures and community practices as proposed by Martin, rather than simply being reflective of an identity associated with gender and age. We might see the culture historical approach which has been prevalent in the study of Anglo-Saxon brooches as a process of simplifying (or stratifying) complex social relations which were mediated through the production, acquisition, use, curation and burial of these objects. By focussing on examining their itineraries, the ways that their role is relationally defined, we find that their deterritorialised nature is critical to their effectiveness in the constitution of Anglo-Saxon society, as they became instigated in the performance and legitimisation of power structures (Martin 2015, 230–1). Brooches were not simply symbols of power; their role was historically contingent, linked to the pan-European tradition of cruciform brooch manufacture and use, the particular context of migration period England (and particularly East Anglia), and also contingent on the material properties of metal, which lend themselves to enrolment in relations of power due to the skilled nature of metal working. Brooches are, therefore, indexical of, or contingent upon, social relations, finding meaning *through* their relations, territorialising these in the performance of personhood but also, thorough the accumulation of relations through their pre-burial life and their continued potential for affect, deterritorialising the grave assemblage, pulling it in other directions, working in the wider constitution of Anglo-Saxon society, both as performed in 6th century England and as constituted through archaeological study in the present.

Whereas the detailed study of an individual artefact reveals how object itineraries were entangled with those of the interred, other materials in the grave also enfold spatial and material relations. Around half of the beads from the cemetery are made from amber. These are a part of a wider assemblage of beads in various materials, including glass (also present in the grave), shale, bone and bronze. These beads were presumably selected in part for their visual effect, but a further consideration could be the potency of these materials and the potential for them to have been understood as having protective qualities, either in life or death (Meaney 1981). Amber is one such material. Documentary sources suggest that it was a

powerful, protective material against head pains, skin conditions and witchcraft for example (Meaney 1981, 70). This knowledge was not distinctly Anglo-Saxon, being found in the classical world. Amber was an exotic material, not available locally, and it was likely imported from the Baltic, although small quantities are present on the coast of eastern England (Huggett 1988, 64). We can, therefore, follow this material in a number of directions. By mapping its association with other materials in graves we can begin to piece together an Anglo-Saxon ontology in which materials were both powerful and vibrant (see also Lund 2017). It might be proposed that adopting an assemblage approach makes the vibrancy of materials an inevitable self-fulfilling prophecy. However, the effort taken to acquire amber, its treatment in deposition, its distinctive material properties and supporting historical evidence all support the case that an awareness of this vibrancy was a feature of early medieval life. By undertaking scientific analysis we can trace the flow of amber from the Baltic into Anglo-Saxon England and map its wider associations, presumably linked to networks of kinship and coastal exchange, the exchange of this powerful material perhaps being undertaken by coastal communities occupying liminal areas. Jeremy Huggett (1988, 64) suggests that amber beads are largely absent from the graves of the earliest Anglo-Saxon communities, becoming more common through the 6th and 7th centuries and that this may indicate that these were personal objects, passed on as heirlooms. Huggett (1988, 92) goes on to argue that the distribution of imported objects in graves is suggestive of exchange systems which vary between Kingdoms, Kent being distinctive from East Anglia, for example. One reason for the presence of amber might be the closing off of eastern trade routes (see McCormick 2001, 69), leading to increasing exploitation of the North Sea (Meaney 1981, 69). Focussing on the beads as exotica firstly stimulates us to ask traditional research questions – how did these objects arrive in England? However, by viewing their presence as an enfolding of time-space we can begin to think around the implications of these beads more closely. They may work across scales, drawing our female into wide reaching political or economic networks. They may be personal objects, with a mnemonic quality, providing a direct link to ancestors, with these objects perhaps carrying stories with them, irrupting into the present through engagements in life, and perhaps contributing to their potency and directing them on a trajectory to the grave.

A final object which might draw our focus is the iron knife. By examining the metallurgy of iron blades, Andrew Welton (2016) has revealed the vibrancy of iron as a material experienced by Anglo-Saxon smiths, with it being complicit in the manufacture of objects; the properties of particular ores or scrap iron having implications for the utility of blades. Furthermore, knives change throughout their lives; as they are used they develop wear and have to be sharpened. These material properties had real implications for the experience of using these objects and can be seen as giving these items distinctive characters within an ontology in which they were understood as animate (Welton 2016, 232–4), the biography of this object therefore potentially creating routes of deterritorialisation through stories and experiences. Joyce and Gillespie criticise the concept of biography for making

objects analogous to people, but, as Welton (2016, 239) suggests, in this context iron “was more animal than mineral” and deposition in the grave might, therefore, legitimately be considered a ‘killing’ of the artefact. Yet if we write the knife off as ‘dead’, we miss a critical point which an assemblage approach reveals. As DeLanda (2011) discusses, an important distinction exists between the capacities and potential of things. Deposition, or ritual killing, can be understood as an attempt to strip the knife of its capacity to act within a particular context and, perhaps, nullify its potential. But the properties of the knife mean that it persists, it still has potential, and by mapping relations we can reveal the emergence of new capacities, for example its capacity to act within archaeological analysis.

Therefore, a key point for consideration from a methodological standpoint is that, even if ‘dead’ from the perspective of Anglo-Saxon society, or gradually forgotten, these objects are re-encountered and enter into new assemblages through study, as has been discussed in relation to the cruciform brooch. Objects form a part of multiple assemblages; of artefact typologies, of grave goods from the Anglo-Saxon period, as an assemblage from a particular context or site. These assemblages are deterritorialised and reterritorialised through the study of other sites, knowledge is circulated, as evidenced through networks of citation in academic scholarship, the things become archaeological artefacts through their relation with other things, an enfolding of space-time caused by interactions with these objects in the present. In this way we can see that an assemblage is not bounded, but is permeable, it leaks beyond its boundaries. Critically, this leakage is not constrained by spatial or temporal scales – action may cause relations to form across scales, showing how affect might come about through the localisation of actions; the local and global are constitutive of each other and cannot be clearly separated. This has implications for the practice of archaeological research, requiring us to adopt approaches which are able to map these deterritorialisations, to work across boundaries which emerge as the product of modern research, acknowledging these for the modern constructions which they are, to allow constellations which might not be immediately apparent to come into focus.

These three objects provide different examples of the ways in which assemblages are deterritorialised, as components work to fold temporal and spatial scales, flattening our ontological perspective to see scale as constituted by relations rather than as existing prior to them (Jones 2012, 52–3). The cruciform brooch, as part of an assemblage of brooches spreading across Europe, and a constituent of power relations, mediates processes of personhood, memory and power through its enrolment in the burial ritual. Amber beads deterritorialise the grave into the constitution and repetition of specialist knowledge about the properties of materials and networks of economic exchange, whilst the iron blade reveals interactions with metal as a vibrant material. The composition of this grave assemblage is more than the gathering of objects. It is a process in which artefact and human biographies intermingle, in which particular past interactions come to the surface, whether circulating as memory or knowledge, or within the physical form and experience of things. The grave is therefore not a linear composition, it is a patchwork of space-times, folded together. It is a process of making contemporary

through memory. These relations are territorialised into a single grave, but through their deterritorialised nature they each reveal ways in which the grave is implicated in the wider emergence and re-iteration of elements of the assemblage we identify as Anglo-Saxon society. Although a process of territorialisation and stratification, it is a process which emerges from historical processes of making, exchanging and experiencing objects and materials, and a process which is deterritorialised, expanded beyond the grave cut, by the vibrancy of these things. Territorialisation, or gathering, and deterritorialisation, or overflowing, are closely linked processes, which are fundamental to understanding the world as relationally constituted. However, these processes do not always occur at random, they are given structure and order. It is this ordering, a process of coding, which we can go on to consider.

Coding: Giving order to relations

So far we have established that assemblages consist of processes of gathering (territorialisation) but are always fluid, with components being pulled into other affective relations (deterritorialisation). Because entities and power emerge out of these processes, assemblages are necessarily self-organising, with relations forming in potentially random and unpredictable ways (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 191). However, these relations do not come from nothing, they are historically contingent, emerging out of past processes which, as discussed, may irrupt from other times or reverberate from a distant location. These past engagements give order to the formation of assemblages, what Deleuze and Guattari term the coding of flows. They describe a process which they term a “double articulation”, a process of transition from molecular to molar, the former being “merely ordered”, the latter “rigid . . . and organised”. We see here the contrast between the molecular assemblage and the molar strata, likened by Deleuze and Guattari to the “passage from sediment to sedimentary rock” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 47). In other words, gathering, or assemblage, is a process out of which form emerges, as flows are sorted (coded) and territorialised, creating molar entities and limiting the forms of becoming that might emerge.

A visual way of understanding the concept of coding is to adopt Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987, 552) metaphor of textured space (Figure 2.3) (Key Concept 6). In a smooth space, flows are free to move and entangle in infinite ways. Coding serves to striate this space, creating barriers for the movement of flows, restricting the potential for interactions to occur; Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 557) describe, for example, how the smooth space of the ocean was striated by processes of navigation. Coding is also emergent and temporary however. Over-coding might occur through the stratification of flows, as discussed in more detail in the next section, or be brought about by slow, incremental processes which gradually cause these striations to be smoothed through deterritorialising performances (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 581). Following DeLanda (2016, 22) we can view assemblages as being defined by two parameters, the degree of territorialisation (from entirely territorialised to entirely deterritorialised) and the degree of coding (from strongly to weakly coded). Strongly territorialised and

coded accumulations are stratifications of flows, whereas entirely uncoded and deterritorialised flows exist as potential assemblages or what Deleuze and Guattari term “the Body without Organs”, unformed flows which move across space-time (Key Concept 3). By thinking about the ways in which the relations which form through practice are coded, we can begin to consider power and agency in the past, not as bestowed upon the world but as emerging with it, with practice coding flows and building structure. Critically, we can see power emerging from between the cracks, the Body without Organs existing in the smooth spaces between the striations, potentially able to emerge and smooth, break down and over-code seemingly persistent structures of power, rather than being eternally subject to them (Horvath and Maicher 2016, 41; see also Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 253). In an archaeological context we might think about this in the way that settlement spaces code social interactions (see Chapter 4) or in the ways that archaeological deposits form.

An example is the concept of structured deposition, which is well established within archaeological theory. It was introduced over 30 years ago (Richards and Thomas 1984), as a means to consider the social and cultural rules surrounding the deposition of objects and materials in the ground (e.g. Hamerow 2006). Over the intervening period, the concept has found particular utility in the identification of ‘ritual’ deposits, a problematic concept which introduces a reified generality (a macro-entity such as ‘the market’ or ‘capitalist system’ which homogenises a diverse set of specific processes; see DeLanda 2016, 14–16) of ‘ritual’ activity, rather than considering the structuring principles behind a depositional act (Morris and Jervis 2011; Thomas 2012). As Duncan Garrow (2012, 92) discusses, the concept of structured deposition emerged with the post-processual critique in archaeology, as a means of ‘acting back’ against functionalist and systemic approaches to deposition, which fail to acknowledge the symbolic capacity of the material world.

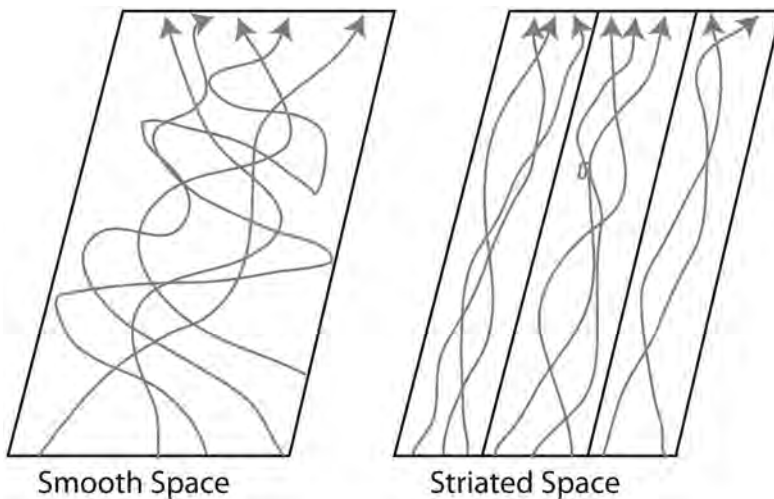


FIGURE 2.3 Diagrammatic representation of smooth and striated space. Image: Ben Jervis.

Critiquing the application of the concept of structured deposition in archaeology, Garrow (2012) suggests that it has created a situation in which all depositional activity is in some ways symbolically meaningful, when, in fact, other processes might explain the patterning of material culture. He proposes a spectrum from what he terms “material culture patterning” to “odd deposits” (2012, 94), the former resulting from processes of everyday life, which may, or may not, include a symbolic element, and the latter being analogous to the ‘special’ deposit, typically interpreted as relating to loosely defined ritual, symbolic or ceremonial activities. Material culture patterning is, therefore, the residue of everyday life. The act of deposition is one of territorialisation, of gathering objects, potentially identifying them as waste (a process of stratification, that is of sorting objects and cementing them as ‘waste’ through deposition) or selecting particular objects or materials for some special treatment, perhaps due to their potent qualities. Odd deposits can be seen as strongly coded, they emerge as a set of intentional, repetitive practices. Material culture patterning might be equally strongly coded, but might also be more weakly coded, in that this patterning does not occur on its own, but is intimately connected to a host of other processes which constitute everyday life.

We might find further analogy in Michael Schiffer’s identification of different types of waste, specifically primary waste, that is material found in its point of deposition such as a smashed pot left on a floor, and secondary waste, that is material gathered and dumped into a pit or other feature. We might see primary waste as loosely coded and secondary waste as more strongly coded, both by circulating perceptions of waste but also by the other activities which go on within a place (see Pollard 2001, 316). In other words, secondary waste goes through a process of double articulation, of sorting and cementing, a process which codes the ways in which this potentially disruptive material can flow (striating the space created and occupied by waste matter), whereas primary waste is not subject to this process, being discarded but open to be encountered, to become reterritorialised into other assemblages, occupying a smoother space across which it can flow more freely. Discussing the deposition of rubbish in the Anglo-Saxon site at Hamwic, for example, I (Jervis 2015) argue that material was swept from yard surfaces into pits which mark property boundaries, but that these boundaries were not used for intensive waste deposition. Here we can see the treatment of waste as coded by a perception that its presence in the yard might be disruptive, but also because the process of marking boundaries coded activity, meaning that these pits did not afford deposition. It becomes necessary, therefore, to think about deposition not as an isolated activity but one contingent on other elements of life, which code not only the generation of waste, but also its treatment.

Coding is most visible in the development of what Garrow (2012) terms ‘odd deposits’, which might include hoards, caches or objects treated in unusual ways. Simply identifying such deposits as ‘odd’, ‘special’, or ‘ritual’ is unsatisfactory however. It homogenises these deposits and creates a generalised approach which masks the specificity and vibrancy of each deposit as a territorialisation of objects

and materials. Furthermore, such generalisation masks the fact that such deposits had a purpose within past ontologies, with their potential for protection, for example, being a real, actualised, capacity of these assemblages rather than a belief (Brück 1999). Indeed, such deposits are a tangible demonstration of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of virtual and actual (Key Concept 8). Following DeLanda (2005), reality exists in three modes; virtual, intensive process and actual. The virtual is defined as that which is real, but cannot be represented. Importantly the virtual is not synonymous with unlimited possibilities, but is rather the structure of these possibilities (DeLanda and Harman 2017, 65). The protective qualities of objects or substances may be one such virtual form of reality, which is made actual by the enrolment of those objects or substances in intensive processes, in this case ritualised processes of deposition, the deposit both enacting that protective quality but also becoming a representation of that knowledge. By focussing on such deposits as assemblages, we can think about the particularity of processes, and seek to understand not only how and why specific depositional patterning emerges, but also how it might be perceived as affective.

KEY CONCEPT 8 Virtual and actual

The twin concepts of the virtual and the actual are drawn from Deleuze's reading of Henri Bergson; the virtual being "the condition for actual events to take place in the present" (Holland 2013, 18). Becoming can be understood as a process of actualisation; "entities and states of affairs coming into being when a set of virtual conditions actually get expressed in a specific way" (Holland 2013, 19). The virtual and the actual are different modes of reality and do not simply equate to realised and unrealised potential (as the virtual consists of everything that has been as well as everything that might have been and might be), nor to tangible and intangible (ideas, for example, are intangible but actual). This is demonstrated well by Oliver Harris' (2017a) discussion of the Neolithic as existing as a virtual past; as a set of multiple potentials, of which specific forms are actualised through particular forms of analysis. DeLanda (2005) describes how the virtual is actualised through intensive processes; we might see these processes as assemblage and the actual as particular forms of strata emerging out of them. The diagram, emerging out of a process of mapping, operates as a visual metaphor for understanding this process; the diagram is not a representation of the virtual, but a process of making it actual. Therefore our role is not to trace connections which made up 'the Neolithic' or 'the past', but to see archaeology as an intensive process of assemblage out of which pasts are actualised. These are pasts which are real in their virtual and actual modes, which have implications for how we

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act now and shape our understanding – research stratifies the past, striating spaces of scholarship, but also creates potential for new intensities to emerge between the striations, as other interventions in the past lead to new processes of actualisation, and, potentially to processes of de-stratification. As such the past is always real but always becoming, oscillating between virtual and actual existence as different processes of diagramming, of mapping pasts, lead to the surfacing of different relations.

Within such contexts the selection of objects might be considered crucial to achieving a desired affect. Discussing deposition in Neolithic Britain, Pollard (2001, 322) stresses the deterritorialised nature of deposits, as “much of the material deposited may have had complex and varied-life histories”, which may have had implications for “how they were buried and by whom”. He perceives of these depositional processes as skilful interactions with the material world; a collection of vibrant materials which do not carry meaning but have achieved particular forms of potency through their enrolment in everyday life (Pollard 2001, 323). Critically, it is not the deposit itself which is ‘ritual’, but the act of deposition which is ritualised, in which certain knowledge of past events and of how to negotiate materials comes to the fore. This knowledge codes depositional practices, not as a formal set of rules relating to dealing with essential things, but as structure emerging from living with the world and coming to know the material; as Pollard (2001, 330) sums up:

Deposition was more than just a process of signification, of creating meaning. Once we recognize the manner in which people and objects are intermeshed, and the fallacy of the person:object dichotomy which has pervaded so much of Western thought, we begin to recognize how the agency of things structures the way people deal with them . . . the obligations set up between human and non-human agents had to be carefully negotiated . . . categories of being had to be constantly worked at.

Deposits are, therefore, not structured by some *a priori* distinction between different types of things. Rather, this structure is historically contingent. Interactions across scales, from the individual itineraries of particular objects to circulating ideas and experiences, which are not directly replicated but approximately reproduced, and serve to code the ways in which deposits accrue.

We can think more deeply about the ways in which the agency of materials, their vibrancy and their potency code interactions with the world through shifting our focus to North America. Here, studies of gathered objects, in the form of medicine bundles and caches, shed further light on the coding of depositional activity. A focus on human power over the ‘natural’ is the result of modernist

engagements with the world, of an anthropocentric ontological position in which materials are shaped by human action. Taking notice of other ontological positions, as briefly discussed in Chapter 1, reveals further potential for thinking about the implications of the non-human for structuring, or coding, our interactions in the world. An important distinction needs to be made between studying relations which occurred from a specific ontological position, as might be proposed for studying Native American engagements with the world (Baires and Baltus 2017) or the relational ontologies proposed for some prehistoric communities in Europe (Jones 2005), and utilising such perspectives as a way of thinking about the world as an analytical tool.

Considering depositional practice in the Mississippian culture, Sarah Baires and Melissa Baltus (2017) demonstrate how an intimate understanding of materials coded interactions. These include the selection of particular materials for mound building, some of which appear sound from a modern engineering perspective, whereas others, such as the apparent banding of coloured layers of earth, are seen as more performative in character. Mound building was more than structural engineering, it was, through the coming together of people and materials, associated feasting and ceremonies, the emergence of a more-than-human community (see also Pauketat 2013, 165; Harris 2014), through which relations with the world were coded by an ancestral understanding of the non-human world. The knowledge, passed on through the practice of mound building, can be seen as being reproduced in the erection of smaller mounds in the hinterland of Cahokia, the political and ceremonial centre of the region. Practice is coded through circulating knowledge which is historically contingent, emergent from generative engagements with the world, common ways of doing which bound people, materials and things into communal relations. A community then, is an assemblage – a generative process of territorialisation, coded by ways of gathering, which might expand beyond a particular locale through the circulation of knowledge and the repetitive enacting of experiences elsewhere.

A further element of coded depositional activity within the Cahokian world is object caching. Deposits of pottery and stone objects are found at a number of sites. These find parallels in ‘special’ deposits across the world and in different time periods. However, to generalise these deposits is to ignore the specific relations from which they emerge, the particular coding structures which emerged from specifically Mississippian ways of living with the world (see Pauketat 2013, 168–70). For example, Baires and Baltus (2017) propose that “pottery vessels, in partnership with humans, animals, plants, fire, water and the earth bring forth sustenance”, with them being “reintroduced into the earth in similar ways in a variety of contexts”, acts which are rational within the Cahokian world, which are affective in the sustaining of communities and which are coded by specific knowledge and understanding of the construction of the world and the potency of the material.

A study by Wendi Field Murray and Barbara J. Mills (2013) contrasting caching practices in the American southwest is particularly instructive for a consideration of the way that assemblages might be coded by knowledge and historical relations

with the world. Caches within Hohokam and Chacoan sites include some similar types of materials, such as animal remains, shells and exotic minerals, but the ways that these were gathered and deposited, and the relational understanding which structured and emerged from these processes, differs considerably. At the Chacoan site of Pueblo Bonito caches are situated within buildings, typically in deep spaces associated with the oldest part of the site and areas associated with religious activity. They seem to have accumulated over the long term. In contrast, Hohokam caches appear as buried deposits, single events, although potentially involving objects acquired and gathered elsewhere over a period of time. Within the Hohokam context the process of caching finds parallels with the process of cremation whereas within the Chacoan context we can see the accumulation of objects as a process of 'retiring' potent materials and things with ancestral links, curating and caring for them, managing their potency and endowing them with a mnemonic quality. In both cases caching is a means of building communities of people, objects, materials and beliefs. We can view these caches as processes of gathering (territorialisation) diverse components, all of which are also deterritorialising; for example objects have diverse sources linking the cache to other places. The repetitive process of caching suggests that the relations and processes that these deposits represent are coded, for example by relations with the animal world (accounting for differences in species representation), economic links and domestic and communal organisation. Past relations with these materials therefore code the flows of objects territorialised as caches, knowledge is re-performed, bringing about repeated ways of dealing with potentially vibrant materials linked to ancestors. Within an ontology structured around relations and in which the human does not have primacy, this is an important function as the materials are potent, powerful and disruptive. As such we can see caching as a coded process, but also one which codes future relations, leading to the ongoing emergence and maintenance of community relations (see Harris 2014).

A further example of how depositional relations might be coded by ways of knowing the world can be seen in the more explicitly animist interactions between anthropomorphic pottery and people in the American southwest (VanPool and Newsome 2012). Here anthropomorphic pottery was discarded in specific ways, pots containing items such as shell, slate and horn cores were buried beneath reservoirs and other pots were discarded within a well and subterranean building, having been decapitated. Christine S. VanPool and Elizabeth Newsome (2012, 257) contrast alternative perspectives on these depositional practices. They propose that from a modernist, Cartesian, position that these vessels might be considered as buried vessels containing offerings and as waste, improperly discarded due to site destruction or abandonment respectively. However, from an animist position we come to know these pots very differently. The buried pots might be seen as animate beings, working to animate and propagate the reservoir, whilst the 'decapitated' pots might be seen as killed so that spirits cannot act as intermediaries. We can see here how the modernist perspective tends towards a bland and generalist interpretation, focussed on the manipulation of materials by people, whilst

the alternative highlights that these vessels were different types of thing within an animist world in which they were affective. Here then, we can see how circulating ideas and knowledge code interactions with the vessels, with different implications. From an animist perspective, the vessels were potent beings, their vibrancy having implications for how they were treated. However, the conventions of modern scholarship and archaeological practice code relations with these vessels differently, as residues of past action by humans acting on the world. Modernity can be seen as over-coding this ontology, striating spaces of encounter with things in ways which prevent the potency of materials from being recognised. In turn, the ontological turn can be seen as both a process of de-coding and over-coding, of breaking down the coding of modernity, smoothing space, and allowing things, knowledge and ideas to flow unformed, creating the potential for other kinds of interactions with archaeological material, alive to the possibilities afforded by engagement with non-western ontologies.

Awareness of alternative ontologies creates potential for different engagements with the archaeological record. We can think, for example, about processes of bundling within Native American culture. Bundles are wrapped collections of objects used in a range of ritual activities, often linked to healing. As such, bundles are powerful assemblages of heterogeneous objects, which are historically contingent, their power “stems from (their) specific origins. . . as well as from (their) biography and the biography of object-persons in it” (Zedeño 2009, 368). The concept of the bundle can be seen as a generalised type of ritual object from a western perspective, but, when we focus on them as processes we find them to be animate, affective gatherings of things, materials, knowledge and people, coded by circulating knowledge, bundles and experiences of the world (including intangible and personal experiences such as dreams and visions). It is not only the gathering of these bundles which are coded in this way; bundles are drawn into liturgical performances, they are animated through processes of burning, prayer and smoking. Bundles are potent gatherings, which must be cared for and used appropriately. Knowledge is passed on, preparing people to engage with bundles correctly (Zedeño 2009, 373), further contributing to the emergence of more-than-human communities as proposed for the processes of deposition discussed above.

This consideration of depositional processes has shown how interactions with the world at large are not solely under the control of humans and that social structures do not form in prescribed ways. Rather, interactions with the world serve to code it, structuring the world emerging through the affective interactions between people and materials. Coding and striation need not, of course, involve humans at all; think for example how the tides code the behaviour of a fishing society. Repetitive interactions and the circulation of knowledge are examples of the ways in which social space comes to be striated, making some relations possible but not others. It is in this way that we can see the social, as a bundle of more-than-human relations, comes to be structured, with structure affording persistence. Although processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation are ongoing, creating a world in flux, coding and historical contingency allows past interactions to resonate in

the present, both time and memory are able to endure. A focus on relations brings about a requirement for specificity, not to generalise activities as ritual or mundane, for example, but to understand how deposits provide traces of ways of living with the world, to identify how and why some coding structures emerge and act on future performances, whilst others might be more fleeting, perhaps over-coded as action overtakes the past. Finally, it is important to consider how our interactions with the past are coded by our own ontological perspectives, experiences and the knowledge which we bring to bear on our engagements with the past, how paradigm shifts might over-code this practical knowledge and in the way that we form affective and generative assemblages of archaeological research, which then go on to circulate and code future enquiry and engagements with past worlds (see Law 2004, 30; Lucas 2012a, 244–5). Having now established the two core elements of assemblages; territorialisation/deterritorialisation and coding, we can progress to think a little more about the implications of assemblage thought for studying persistence and change in the archaeological record.

Explaining persistence: Stratification and generalisation

Assemblage thought emphasises difference, emergence, flow and immanence. Therefore, it might appear difficult to consider the issues of persistence and continuity. Chris Fowler and Oliver Harris (2015) demonstrate this through their presentation of two readings of Latour's consideration of objects. An Ingoldian reading of Latour might see objects existing as prior to action, as connections have to occur between things. In contrast a reading through the eyes of philosopher Graham Harman focusses on criticising Latour's emphasis on the importance of relations themselves; if things are always immanent they cannot exist. In responding to these criticisms, Fowler and Harris (2015, 132) propose that historical process has been ignored. Relations "accumulate and adhere" (Fowler and Harris 132), a point missed by Harman. Therefore things exist not prior to action, but *through* action; our interactions are always at a middle point, things have emerged out of some action and might become enrolled in any number of other relations, but they emerge in the present through a particular set of relations. What is being described here is a coding of flows; it is because of historical contingency – the sticky, cumulative and affective nature of relations which means that we don't need to start from nothing, but also that we are not dealing with a fully formed entity prior to action. These contrasting perspectives on Latour's writing do, however, serve to reveal a fundamental paradox in new materialist thought, between permanence and immanence (see also Anderson *et al* 2012, 183–4).

Fowler and Harris (2015) draw on the work of Karen Barad to show how this paradox might be addressed, through the adoption of her terms 'wave' and 'particle'. Depending upon our perspective we might see any archaeological assemblage as a wave – an indeterminate process of becoming – or as a particle – a bounded and localised entity. Waves can be diffracted, meaning that the same assemblage might come to be distributed through multiple sets of simultaneous relations. None of

these realisations are false, but emphasise different facets of the assemblage, bringing different relations to the fore. Drawing on the history of the Neolithic monument West Kennett long barrow (Figure 2.4), Fowler and Harris (2015) show how the monument is an ever changing assemblage, being enrolled in multiple sets of relations, emerging as a wave; a fluid and ever changing entity. This wave might be diffracted in various ways, the bones interred in the barrow, for example, being excavated and removed to a laboratory for study and translation into scholarly data and reports (Fowler and Harris 2015, 142). Action can also serve to particularise the monument; bounding it as a visitor monument, as scholarly literature or in the form of a drawing; a process which creates a particular, enduring, West Kennett.

I now wish to return to the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari to think about the process of particularisation and its implications a little more. As an emerging, indeterminate set of relations, emerging from the past, we might see the wave as analogous to the assemblage. In contrast, the particle is a process of sorting and bonding particular entities, it is a process of stratification. Different definitions of the concept of strata exist in the literature. For DeLanda (2016, 23), strata are an extreme version of the assemblage; strongly coded and territorialised. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 47) they are something different to an assemblage, phenomena out of which assemblages might form through a process of de-stratification. In either case, strata are a contradictory phenomenon. From one perspective they are a means of sorting (coding and territorialising) flows in a way which brings about persistence, of giving form (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 47) but from another they are affective and bring about change by creating opportunities for deterritorialisation or de-stratification, as they



FIGURE 2.4 West Kennet long barrow, Wiltshire. Image: Ben Jervis.

are continually shaken and ruptured (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 64). Assemblage is the *process* which allows strata to relate to one another, to at once become stratified (a process of territorialisation and coding; of gathering and ordering), but also to be de- and reterritorialised, to persist whilst at the same time becoming something else, to be both molar and molecular (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 82). As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 187) tell us, strata offer opportunities to experiment to explore the other ways which what we perceive as stable entities might act or be acted upon. We can see this within the concept of the particle as a “circulating reference” (Fowler and Harris 2015). Particular iterations of the monument, or any assemblage, circulate but are not neutral, they are drawn into other relations, deterritorialised, and are affective. However, having gone through a process of sorting and cementation, relations persist and relations are coded by previous processes of stratification, which might slowly come undone as these particular versions of the assemblage are brought into contact with each other. Critically, this process of stratification might occur in the past or in the present, and action might lead to multiple strata, or particular existences, emerging.

What this tells us is that although assemblages are in flux, persistence is also a quality of relations, which might be afforded in various ways. It might come about through a process of stratification, allowing past relations to become ‘sticky’, causing them to circulate in other performances. It might come about through a process of coding, a striation of social space meaning that ongoing relations are more predictable, and these two processes might occur together; it is in thinking about this dual process of coding and stratification that it becomes useful to think through DeLanda’s approach of assemblage and strata being different points on a spectrum. A further way that we might consider persistence is to think about the concepts of immanence and fluidity themselves through a consideration of the temporality of relations.

We have already determined that relations might accumulate and adhere, but we can also call into question the nature of immanence, in that it need not be equated to immediacy. Just as coding might bring about different levels of indeterminacy or predictability, so the qualities of materials might bring about different temporalities, what we might term slow materialities, which are no less immanent but which create temporality on their own terms. Certain relations are extremely rapid, a conversation or a sensorial encounter, for example. Whilst these might linger in the memory, and have implications which could code future relationships, the relations themselves are over very quickly. Other relations are much slower to form and undo. We might think, for example, of the chemical bonds which hold stone together. Stone appears permanent, but is, in fact, a vibrant material, gradually changing through chemical, biological and physical processes. These relations have their own temporality however, they are slow, giving stone a material persistence, if not permanence, which brings continuity and persistence to relations with it. This is not to say that stone exists as an essential material prior to human intervention, rather that it is a molar entity, formed of molecular relations, and that these relations might code further relations with stone, causing it to be worked

in particular ways and, as it finds social uses in buildings, it affords persistence, it codes interactions and is stratified as it is sorted and manipulated by people. This persistence affords the material to 'become contemporary', allowing past relations to come to the surface in the present, be that through everyday encounters with the materiality of buildings or their archaeological study.

Together these three concepts; the temporality of relations, coding and stratification, are useful tools for overcoming the paradox of an enduring world of fluid and immanent relations. The material world is not stable, but past interactions with it code flows, sometimes to the extent of stratification, creating bounded entities which might prove affective. Of course, what we do not see here is permanence. Permanence is an illusion. Durability is achieved not by 'locking' relations, but by being alive to the multiple temporalities of relations and their affective qualities; the way in which relations do not unfold in entirely random ways, but in ways which are historically contingent. The idea of diffraction, is useful for thinking about the enchained nature of these relations and how they might sprout in various directions, whilst the idea of the stratum as circulating reference awaiting de-stratification allows us to understand how relations might persist through a coming together of people and more-than-representational media; be that legal documents, scientific analyses or ideas passed on through word of mouth. We therefore overcome this paradox by arguing that such a paradox does not exist because permanence does not exist; instead we are being fooled into seeing it by the complex temporalities of material life.

Transitions and change

An assemblage approach therefore emphasises ongoing change, although this change might occur at varying temporalities. Change comes about because of the molecular nature of assemblages (their vibrancy) and due to the deterritorialised nature of assemblages (the way that no entity is entirely bounded). Furthermore, although coded by past action, striated spaces can be smoothed as coding relations are unpicked, a process termed "over-coding" by Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 230). We can, therefore, think about the implications of assemblage thought for thinking about how change comes about and the ways in which molecular changes in assemblages might reverberate beyond the immediate assemblage.

This question has been particularly directly addressed by Rachel Crellin (2017) in her work on burial practices on the Isle of Man in the Bronze Age. Crellin shows how each burial assemblage, whilst part of a wider tradition, is an individual process of assembly, a repetition of practices, rather than a replication. As Jones (2017) highlights, repetition inevitably leads to changes as reproduction is not perfect; practices are imperfectly remembered or enacted for example. Change occurs at multiple scales, these processes of repetition, when compiled with others reveal how elements of traditions might change, leading us to identify assemblages such as 'Bronze Age burial practices'. These changes do not result from the imposition of a division, but rather through an ongoing process of molecular transformations,

which might, eventually, reach a critical mass which leads to the assemblage being something different to what came before.

Crellin draws on DeLanda's concept of the phase transition to explain this change. We might think of the way in which water changes to steam; molecules are heated and gradually separate, only becoming steam, undergoing the critical 'phase transition' at 100 degrees Celsius. This approach can be identified at multiple different levels. Think, for example, about technological change – a gradual experimenting with materials leads to the incremental development of skill and techniques, which, at a critical point, becomes a new technological practice. Similarly, we might see changes performed at the molecular level in farming, artefact technology and other areas as building towards the phase transition which marks the shift from Mesolithic to Neolithic society (Jones and Sibbesson 2013; Harris 2017a).

Because assemblages are deterritorialised, phase transitions might come about because of relations which stretch beyond the assemblage in question. Crellin (2017, 120) shows how cremation practices are contingent upon the properties of wood (fuel), processes of ceramic manufacture and traditional rituals of burial for example. New types of pottery emerge with the development of burial practices. As new components, such as stone cists, enter burial assemblages they stimulate further changes in dealings with the dead. Change, therefore, is inevitable due to the vibrancy of actants; it occurs across scales and does not have a defined destination, instead emerging from imperfectly reproduced practices, which give an illusion of permanence.

It is here we can come to the concept of over-coding. As already discussed, coding is a way in which flows are structured and bring a degree of persistence and structure to relations. Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 252–3; 258) show how the process of over-coding is also one of slow, incremental transition, in which processes of change and continuity might co-exist. They talk in general terms about the transition from feudalism to capitalism in the western world. Whilst such a polarised distinction can be critiqued, this example is instructive for showing how change emerges in unpredictable ways. We have already seen through our analysis of the maiolica vessel from Southampton that there was not a simple, linear progression to capitalism, rather it emerged as an economic system and as a mindset from a patchwork of engagements dispersed through space and time; from the demographic and economic implications of the Black Death on labour and land markets, to the emergence of new technologies and the breaking down of medieval value systems. Capitalism did not exist prior to capitalist relations, so we cannot see a simple progression from feudal to capitalist, rather, as Oliver Harris and John Robb (2013, 222) put it, change can be conceptualised as a series of "swirls and scales"; it is helpful, perhaps, to think of change not as a process of linear development but as a changing texture (indeed, this is the metaphor that Deleuze and Guattari use in their idea of smooth and striated space; see also Harris and Robb 2013, 226). We can see how the performance of commerce throughout the Middle Ages, which, in turn was contingent on processes such as agricultural intensification

and urban growth, gradually reshaped people's relations with the world; generating wealth, commoditising labour and land, creating opportunities for people to exercise choice. Although steps were taken to stratify these flows brought about by commercial interaction, for example through the establishment of sumptuary legislation, we can see how the performance of commercial interactions gradually over-coded prevailing structures. Capitalism was not a clean break, capitalist and 'feudal' elements co-existed, but the performance of commercial relations and their affect gradually caused old structures to dissolve and new ones to emerge.

KEY CONCEPT 9 Tracing and mapping

Deleuze and Guattari use the metaphor of cartography for thinking about how we understand processes of becoming. The term tracing is used to describe the process of representing a world that is already in existence, a process of making a copy. In contrast, mapping, or cartography, is a productive process of following connections, of immersing oneself in the processes of assemblage which are being studied. Mapping creates the potential for unexpected findings to emerge from following connections, of realising difference, rather than the repetition of received wisdom which comes about through tracing. A fruitful parallel can be drawn with Tim Ingold's (2007a) concepts of transportation (direct movement between known points, equating to tracing) and wayfaring (equating to mapping). One might also perceive of networks as emerging from tracing (joining nodal points) whilst meshworks (messier entanglements of flows or lines) are understood through mapping.

Reflecting on periodisation in the context of the Middle Ages, Visa Immonen (2012) shows how periods are arbitrarily defined and give the impression of commonalities and continuities interspersed with change. These are divisions which emerge through our modern interactions with archaeological materials; through which we have to classify things as belonging to one category or another. Such an approach to periodisation creates a linear idea of time, failing to acknowledge the ways in which the past acts on the present, just as the present acts on the past. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 11–12) draw a contrast between two ways of approaching relations; tracing (in which links between entities are followed, implying a world which is known prior to analysis) and mapping (an intervention into relations out of which new knowledge emerges, a process of cartography in which a map of relations is created anew) (Key Concept 9). Periodisation creates an approach to chronology which is a tracing and stratification, we identify bundles of relations which we can homogenise as 'Neolithic' or 'Medieval'. This is not to say that they are not real; as Harris (2017a, 135) argues in relation to the Neolithic we can see periodisation as a form of virtual 'diagram', not a representation of an entity which

was, but as a productive process, through which the Neolithic as archaeological period is actualised in archaeological discourse; in other words by mapping relations we can create multiple ‘Neolithics’ or ‘Medievals’, all related and all real, but all the result of working on the past, rather than being the direct result of that past (see also Jervis 2018). Furthermore, our temporal schemes are typically characterised by some sudden break – religious, political or economic change – although there is not consensus over which breaks are significant (Dawdy 2010, 763–4). An assemblage approach acknowledges that these periods are reified generalities. A focus on molecular change, incremental developments, middles rather than beginnings and ends, processes of over-coding and dispersed processes reveals a more realistic view of continuity and change, with generalities not existing prior to performance, but as divisions of a fluid, multi-temporal, set of processes of living with the world.

Assemblages and Actor-Networks: Thinking about difference

So far I have introduced some of the key concepts within assemblage thought as they might be usefully applied to archaeological material. As was discussed in the previous chapter, assemblage thought is but one of a number of ‘non-representational’ approaches available to us to think about archaeological questions, with the symmetrical approach of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) also being a popular body of work among archaeologists. In closing Chapter 1 I suggested that my approach in this book would be to focus on assemblage thought, but also to draw parallels and approaches from other bodies of scholarship where they might have some value. Therefore, in closing this chapter, I feel that it is fruitful to reflect briefly on the similarities and differences between assemblage thinking and ANT, not to advocate for one over the other, or identify them as equivalents, but rather to explore avenues for their combination.

We can begin by thinking about what it is that links ANT and assemblage thinking. Both are approaches to understanding how orders emerge, hold together and fall apart, and exploring the implications of these actions (Müller 2015, 27). Furthermore, whilst DeLanda has developed a broader assemblage theory, for Deleuze and Guattari the assemblage is a tool, a concept for thinking with, just as for ANT scholars it is not a theory but a set of methodologies which is being presented (Latour 1999). There is a great deal of disagreement over the extent to which the two bodies of work are compatible. For John Law (2009, 147), one of the founders of ANT, “there is little difference between Deleuze’s *agencement*. . . and the term ‘Actor-Network’”, whilst Harman (2009, 30) calls Latour the “anti-Deleuze”, highlighting the lack of interest in flow in ANT as a fundamental and irreconcilable difference with assemblage thinking. Archaeologists and geographers using the concept of assemblages have drawn on concepts from both sources as much as they have been attached to one body of work over the other, and it is certainly fruitful to consider how drawing upon the strengths of each approach can have analytical benefits (Müller and Schurr 2016).

Tim Ingold, a scholar inspired by Deleuze, highlights a number of dissatisfactions with ANT, many of which we can see as emerging from its origins in Science and Technology Studies. Within ANT Ingold perceives relations as existing between entities with affect emerging out of collective action. This is in contrast to an approach in which we perceive affect emerging through a process of joining 'with' rather than 'to' (Ingold 2007a; 2016); the creation of something new rather than the joining of two pre-defined entities. By *joining with* we can think of a process of two strands knotting together, or two liquids merging together, in which the link is the entity. A *joining to* approach makes us think in terms of two entities as being joined together, as within the idea of a network. Therefore, within a *joining to* approach, there is a concern defining the entities which join (as human or non-human) and a concern with where the emerges for and from this process also emerges. In contrast, if we think in terms of *joining with* we come to think in terms of processes of becoming, the emergence of something(s) new (Ingold 2013, 248). ANT is distinctive for the way in which it makes agency a focus as well as the way that Actor-Networks are discrete entities. They are multiple in a way that suggests multiple realities exist if we shift our perspective (Buchanan 2015, 385) and it is difficult to explore how the exterior, or deterritorialised, relations are brought to bear on the Actor-Network; each Actor-Network is a bounded whole. In contrast, within assemblage thought there is one reality which is multiple in and of itself (Buchanan 2015, 386), in other words whilst an entity may be constitutive of multiple assemblages, its affect has implications across assemblages as we are seeing multiple processes at work within a single reality.

We can take, as an example, Annemarie Mol and John Law's (1995, 288–91) consideration of the Doppler, a piece of ultrasound equipment. They begin by telling three stories about the Doppler from the perspective of the surgeon, the midwife and the technician. They propose that there are three ways of telling stories about the Doppler. The first is to talk about different things which happen to the Doppler in different contexts. Such an approach, they argue, sees the machine as situated within a social context, rather than being a constituent of it. Therefore it makes assumptions about the continuity of the Doppler as a stable material entity. The second approach emphasises the differences between the stories, suggesting that different Dopplers are performed in each story. This is an approach more akin to an assemblage perspective, in which there are multiple Dopplers, which exist in and of the Doppler itself. The third option is that which is preferred by Mol and Law from an ANT perspective. Here, the emphasis is on the connections between the stories, creating a patchwork, creating the possibility that these Dopplers are different in themselves, because they are made in the moment that an Actor-Network is constituted. The difference here is that the second narrative allows us to explore a single Doppler becoming something different through deterritorialisation, whilst the third approach questions the existence of the Doppler outside of relations. The difference is one of itinerancy and joining with in the creation of the Doppler multiple and one of joining up components which actualise the Doppler in practice. This highlights the importance of flow

(which we can see in the second iteration of the narrative) versus the importance of connectedness (as exemplified in the third).

Despite this metaphysical perspective on materiality, ANT as a method seeks to reach understanding through description, a method which naturally causes it to focus on the actual, what is realised, and lends itself to its application in an empirical manner (the Doppler only exists as an entity if it can be seen to exist in a particular mode) (Müller and Schuur 2016, 220). This is contrast to an assemblage approach in which the potential is the key focus (the virtual Dopplers are actualised in different ways, the virtual being the structure of these possibilities; Delanda and Harman 2017, 65), a focus which derives from its political and philosophical origins. It can be proposed, therefore, that there is common ground in the way that both approaches seek to understand the way that relations form and the implications of these relations, but also that they have a different focus. ANT provides a good understanding of how stability is achieved. Within its methodological armoury there are tools such as the 'black box' which allow ideas to circulate, and the Actor-Network is perceived of as a collective of actants across which agency is distributed. The emphasis on fluidity and affect within assemblage thought forces us to be aware of what is external and its affect on relations, it allows us to think in terms of potential and, in their nuanced writing, Deleuze and Guattari are also able to show how humanity is distinctive, stressing difference and overcoming some of the concerns which have been raised about the symmetry of ANT being synonymous with equivalence (Müller and Schurr 2016, 224). We might, therefore, see ANT being useful for revealing the structure as actualised through action (understanding what is joined to what) and assemblage for revealing the processes through which the potential emerged and was actualised (understanding a process of 'joining with' to create a new entity and the affect of this process). We might propose, therefore, that assemblage thought and ANT are similar approaches which are best deployed for answering different types of question; ANT for understanding how relations stabilise (although the tools of coding and territorialisation allow us to explore this, albeit from the position that relations are inherently unstable) and assemblage for understanding the implications of the unpredictable.

Finally, it is worth briefly highlighting debate within the literature on the idea of assemblage itself. Assemblage Theory relates specifically to the development of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas by DeLanda and it is this accessible and practically minded application of the assemblage which is commonly utilised in archaeological research. However, DeLanda's work is not without its critics. For Ian Buchanan (2008, 92) DeLanda reduces the idea of assemblage to a theory of "scaling up", presenting a view which might be seen as a chain reaction of affect from the bottom upwards or the top downwards through an emphasis on relations of exteriority, or deterritorialisation. Ingold (2016, 13) finds this problematic as it implies, as with ANT, the ability to 'join up', with the "inner natures more or less unaffected, and that can therefore be detached and reconfigured in other arrangements without loss". This problem is mitigated to a degree when we think about the

multiple nature of reality and are able to perceive of assemblage as both a process of joining up and joining with; any component of assemblage can join with another through deterritorialisation, whilst also joining up two entities which may or may not bleed into one another. This argument is revisited in Chapter 3.

What is lacking from DeLanda's conceptualisation, however, is any explanation of *why* entities might join up, his work lacks the concept of desire, the impulse which is converted into affect, or power, by the process of assemblage (Buchanan 2008, 92; see also Gao 2013). Desire is a complex idea, and it might easily be written off in the same way as agency, as something which is everywhere and therefore moot. However, by equating desire with the Body without Organs, as something integral to the assemblage, it becomes a critical concept. Desire is what drives the processes of arrangement, if assemblages are "desiring machines" they process, transform and produce desire; "desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects . . . Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn and breaks the flows" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 16). Desire should not be equated to causality or agency, it is not a lacking, it is a vital force which allows potential connections to be realised, which allows unlikely and unpredictable relations to emerge; as unformed flow it is critical to understanding why the world is unstable and in flux, rather than fixed and repetitive (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 16; 1987, 192; Gao 2013 414; Hellstrom Reimer 2016, 167). The purpose of coding is to control desire, territories are an outcome of it, deterritorialisation driven by it. In a sense, the why we are seeking to address isn't why things join up, but why they don't, why particular desiring processes do not occur. As such, DeLanda inverts the virtual and the actual; he situates power in the virtual and structures in the actual (as is apparent in his consideration of the city in *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History* for example), whereas for Deleuze and Guattari power is actual with potential (virtual capacities) lying in the physical materialisations of power. The power of assemblage is in revealing this process, as without it we see the effect but not the process behind it. There is, however, much to take from DeLanda's work and a number of his terms, concepts and ideas are put to work in the coming chapters. There is a need for clarity in explaining the approach taken, what it is that we are seeking to bring into focus; in other words, picking the correct tools for the job at hand.

Assemblage thought: An analytical toolbox

This chapter has introduced some of the key concepts of assemblage thought. In the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari's original writing, it is not my intention that these concepts be rigorously enforced in some form of 'proper' assemblage analysis. Rather, certain elements of assemblage thought lend themselves to particular questions, be that thinking about processes through which particular deposits come together (territorialisation), the wider context of an archaeological object (deterritorialisation), the ways in which things come together (coding), questions of persistence, change or the way in which relations congeal and irrupt through the biography of

individual artefacts or deposits. What assemblage thought provides is an analytical toolbox, which we can use to frame questions, critique prevailing ontological positions within research and engage with archaeological evidence not as essential but as formed relationally, as enfoldings of space-times which we might be able to reveal in part through analysis. These concepts are simply tools for re-imagining the world, but an assemblage approach, within a wider suite of non-representational approaches such as those discussed in the previous chapter do force us to shift our perspective on the world; to think about the assumptions we make, the ways that we choose to homogenise evidence, the weight we give to emergent processes and how we define material agency and its implications for our understanding of the past. Archaeology is itself an assemblage, it brings together circulating knowledge, material remains, theoretical concepts and analytical apparatus; it is an affective bundling of these components. As such, the critical implication for archaeological practice is that we do not discover the past, but rather understanding of it emerges through this set of interactions, through which past relations irrupt coded by our questions and practices, which territorialise and deterritorialise archaeological information in particular ways. In what follows these tools and this perspective on archaeological research are put into practice through case studies relating to objects and materials (Chapter 3) and the archaeology of urbanism (Chapter 4).

Note

- 1 Indeed Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 192) state that “The BwO [Body without Organs] is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires”.

3

MATERIAL AND FORM

In the previous chapter it was proposed that the world can be thought of as consisting of flows of matter, things, ideas and energy. Within a fluid world how should we think about objects? Conventional archaeological approaches make a distinction between materials (clay, metal, stone) and things (tools, vessels, dress accessories); a distinction captured in the term ‘material culture’ which implies an inscription of culture onto an otherwise natural, and neutral, material (Schiffer 1999, 6; Henare *et al* 2007, 2; Conneller 2011, 24). We sort these things into more and more refined categories, based largely on ideas of their function and physical traits created during their production. Theoretical developments under the umbrella of ‘post-processual’ or ‘contextual’ approaches have demonstrated that the same object could hold a variety of meanings, acting as a symbol in different ways depending upon the context in which it was encountered or used. In North American contexts ceramics were encountered in a very different way by slaves than by the households with which they were associated, for example (e.g. Fennell 2000; Wilkie 2000, Matthews *et al* 2002). It is, therefore, no longer tenable for an object to be seen as having a single meaning, yet when we categorise these objects, static typological schemes, in which an object is a particular ‘type’ and not another ‘type’, have persisted, as Astrid Van Oyen (2013, 81) states:

it seems like a distorted state of affairs to start an analysis of material culture by separating it into pre-defined categories only to conclude that similar pre-defined categories are too easy a way of interpreting the complex entanglements [of colonial encounter].

Furthermore, within such an approach meaning becomes a form of abstraction, being distanced from the things themselves (Henare *et al* 2007, 3) as they are simply slotted into some overlying social or historical system. An assemblage

approach, I propose, fundamentally destabilises this state of affairs. By viewing things as assemblages, they are inherently processual, a view entirely at odds with the concept of the fixed, easily categorised, object, allowing us to think about things not as representational, but as entities which are produced by and productive of social relations, as participants in action (Henare *et al* 2007, 7); in other words it allows us to move to recast our ontological understanding of the material world. As Levi Bryant (2012) points out, this new ontology is not an ontology of substance but an ontology of power, in which we think less in terms of what entities are, but what substances do. Substances exist only as relations, their capacity to cause affect existing in relations; affect relies upon the capacity to affect and be affected; a knife can only cause pain if it is drawn into relation with a body which can feel it. Therefore this potential only becomes a capacity through the processes of assemblage defined in Chapter 2, and may occur in multiple registers as desire plays out in processes of arrangement or assemblage (Bryant 2012, 533–4). Capacities are therefore revealed through intervention with things (DeLanda and Harman 2017, 46) and qualities are not inherent in materials or objects, but are the effects of processes; colour is not defined, but the property of relations between surfaces and light; objects are not inherently beautiful but develop that quality as they are encountered within particular sets of relations; “we encounter a kaleidoscopic variation in qualities suggesting the existence of subterranean powers beneath and behind the parade of shifting qualities” (Bryant 2012, 538). The aim in this chapter is therefore to shift the ways that we think about archaeological objects and the materials that they are composed of, to explore the implications of thinking about the material as eventful processes; to understand what the material world is, and what it consists of (Ingold 2007b, 3).

Fluid objects

Think about perhaps the most seemingly fixed of artefacts: a cast copper alloy object such as the Roman brooch depicted in Figure 3.1. These are objects with a form fixed by a mould, they have a specific design, they are replicated and seemingly of a ‘type’. Surely it is reasonable to extrapolate from this corpus of types, to assume that these things in some way relate to pre-defined categories which are reproducible through archaeological analysis of their size, shape and decoration? Of course, they may have become cherished personal possessions, have been interred in graves or broken in a fit of rage, but this meaning is separate to their uniformity of form . . . isn’t it? After all, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 479) state, “matter and form have never seemed more rigid than in metallurgy. . .”

This perspective is built on the assumption that form is somehow important. Form is imposed onto the material; it can be categorised. But what if we take a different view; that form and material are one and the same, form being a coding, a stratification or transformation, of material (Ingold 2013, 24–6)? The matter is the same but comes to be arranged differently; making is a form of transition, in which objects emerge at the molecular level (both literally and in the metaphorical



FIGURE 3.1 Roman brooch of Hod Hill type, dating to 1st century CE. Recovered by a metal detectorist in Boynton, East Yorkshire (Portable Antiquities Scheme Record number LVPL-25C7DC). Image: National Museums Liverpool, reproduced under CC BY-SA4.0 Licence.

sense) through an accumulation of changes which eventually manifest at the molar level – manufacture affects the intensity of material relations and stimulates a phase transition (DeLanda 2016, 117; see Chapter 2) which we see as the transition from unformed material to object. A similar example to the moulded brooch is the moulded brick, which Tim Ingold (2013, 25) argues does not emerge as an imposition of regular rectangular form onto the clay, but is a “contraposition of equal and opposed forces immanent in both the clay and the mould”, in other words it emerges as the actualisation of virtual capacities of the material and mould through their being brought into relation with one another.

The key word in the quote from Deleuze and Guattari stated above is *seemed*. This rigidity is an illusion if we think about things within a world of flows. Form then becomes a thickening or intensification of flows, a congealing of metal *is still* metal; it *is still* vibrant, it *is still* processual. Whilst things may be made in accordance with a mental template, they do not exactly reproduce this, they are not simple materialisations of human will; the vibrancy of materials acts back, making demands that the maker has to compensate for, as demonstrated by Ingold (2000, 339–49; 2013, 22–4) in his reflections on the ways that materials influence the process of basket making (see also Conneller 2011, 30). The critical concept here is not making as reproduction but making as repetition, a process which is inevitably imperfect (Jones 2017, 87). To make this case does not deny human intentionality, “but does see it as less definitive of outcomes” (Bennett 2010, 32, 79). As a case in point, Soumhya Venkateson (2014) argues against Ingold, highlighting how stone masons mark out the form before they begin carving. Yet to see

this as an absolute imposition of form is equally flawed, as the material resists this imposition, perhaps fracturing in an unintended way. We can see then how ideas of form may emerge from past interactions, but this is all they are; forms themselves are articulations of skill and material properties which emerge through the process of crafting, the repetition of relations with materials, creating things with what we might view as flaws or inconsistencies, but could equally be viewed as materials having their say.

As Bruno Latour (2005, 27) states, “there are no groups, only group formation”. Groups emerge through seeing things as alike, through perception and are therefore as durable as the relations from which they emerge. The casting of the object is one such process, seemingly creating a particular object, but in fact being a process which creates a thing which is itinerant, which flows, which is defined not by its form but by the relations into which it is entangled, which it flows through and which it avoids. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 479) continue “yet the succession of forms tends to be replaced by the form of a continuous development”.

What, then, is metallurgy? For Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 479) it is: “the consciousness or thought of the matter-flow, and metal the correlate of this consciousness . . . metal is neither a thing nor an organism, but a body without organs”. Metallurgy is an intervention into the flow of metal. Metal objects are sedimentations, accumulations of substance distributed in form to create a material entity at a larger scale (De Landa 1997, 269); forms are arrangements of vibrant materials and, therefore, are inherently unstable. As arrangements of matter, form and substance are indistinguishable; forms are tightly territorialised bundles of matter and energy coded by flows of skill, that is the practical knowledge of how to intervene in these flows, to manipulate their material properties. It is not forms that are reproduced in the workshop, but skill; practical knowledge, ways of working with flows. Just as bodies might be perceived as vehicles for the reproduction of genetic material (DeLanda 1997, 113), so objects are vehicles for the reproduction of skill and knowledge, achieved in the relation between maker and material (Ingold 2013, 52–3; Conneller 2011, 5). For Ingold both material properties and skill emerge in this relationship; as matter becomes caught up into flows of life it is animate (a view which is subtly different to a Deleuzian approach in which matter has its own inorganic life; see Conneller 2011, 13). Chantal Conneller (2011, 19–20) argues for a focus on process, proposing that:

[things are the result of] material-technological assemblages composed of temporal processes of deformation and transformation (events) and of variable qualities which are produced as affect . . . Materials always exist as a becoming – they are never finished – and as such always carry within themselves their relation to something else.

As Michael Schiffer (1999, 12) puts it “behaviour is defined as a relational phenomenon”; “the boundary of behaviour does not lie at the end of a(n) . . . organism but extends beyond it to include materials involved in activities (Walker *et al* 1995, 5)”.

By reflecting on this emphasis on process and relationality we can understand what is meant by metallurgy being the consciousness of the matter-flow. Metal is caused by a transformation, from a solid ore or ingot into a liquid or semi-liquid state that can be cast or hammered respectively. Metal, as a substance or object is, therefore, a correlate of this practical knowledge. But what is meant by the statement that metal is a ‘Body without Organs’?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Body without Organs is a term for the unformed flows which move across space-time. For Manuel DeLanda (1997, 330) it is a term approximately synonymous with the concepts of the rhizome and the smooth space and it is the referent (unformed flows) rather than the label which is important. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 184) explain the Body without Organs (BwO) thus:

the organism is not all the body, the BwO, rather it is a stratum on the BwO. In other words, a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labour from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds. . .

Let us work through this passage and its implications for our understanding of things. If we take the body as metal we can take the organism to be the thing, or the form. This organism is a coagulation of flows. Therefore, the thing does not exist as a pre-determined and stable form, but as a thickening, a coagulation or hardening, of flows. This can be thought of literally in the case of metallurgy as the liquid metal flows into a mould and hardens to form an object, or the heated metal is shaped by hammering; as form emerges at the intersection of human action and material it becomes an emergent quality of relations through which differences between materials come to the surface (Ingold 2013, 22; Conneller 2011, 12). This transformation imposes form, functions and associations onto the substance. This is a process of stratification or sedimentation, which is critical for thinking about the metal object as an assemblage.

At a simple level we might think of a brooch as an assemblage in a multitude of ways. It is a bundling of material and skill, of cultural ideas, it carries with it personal associations. However, this is a flattened version of the assemblage, it is useful for thinking through objects as relational entities, but loses something of the potency, vibrancy and temporality of materials (see Anderson *et al* 2012; Buchanan 2015; 2017; Nail 2017 for criticism of this use of the term ‘assemblage’ in the social sciences). It is important, therefore, that we pay attention to Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the word ‘stratum’ in their discussion of the Body without Organs.

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 585) a stratum is different to an assemblage: “assemblages are already different from strata. They are produced in the strata, but operate in zones where milieus become decoded” and “an assemblage is necessary for the relation between two strata to come about” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 82) and “a single assemblage can borrow from different strata” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 84). Developing this idea, DeLanda (2016, 23) perceives of a continuum from the assemblage to the strata; indeed that continuum may be perceived as

running from the entirely de-coded plane of consistency to the tightly coded strata, with assemblages existing in the middle, as more or less coded and territorialised accumulations, bridging the actual and the virtual. Therefore, depending upon the reading of assemblage thought being drawn upon, the strata might be separate from the assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari) or a particular type of assemblage (DeLanda).

Strata are formed through a process of sedimentation, a double articulation of sorting and cementation. The forming of a metal object is one such process. For example, the production of an iron sword:

. . . implies the actualization of a first singularity, the melting of iron at high temperature; then a second singularity, the successive decarbonisations; corresponding to these singularities are traits of expression.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 473)

We see the sorting of flows through one transformation (melting) and their cementation through a form of coding, here the enacting of skill through the process of decarbonisation. Our metal object therefore has the characteristics of a stratum, rather than of an assemblage. It consists of a sorted (territorialised) and cemented (coded) hardening of flows. It is a recognisable form, an object.

Reconstructing the production of an artefact as the materialisation of a pre-conceived idea is a process of stratification, a way of thinking in an arborescent way; as a tree growing from its roots (see Chapter 2). An alternative means of thinking about artefact production is the idea of the chaîne opératoire (e.g. Dobres 2000; Roux 2017), in which each stage of the production sequence is seen as a situated social process, in which a variety of influences come to bear on the transformation of the material. As such, the chaîne opératoire allows us to see artefact manufacture as a processes of assemblage, as things, materials and people become together in a rhizomatic way (Conneller 2011, 20); the virtual capacities of unformed flows of materials, skill, tools and other participants being actualised through the objects 'taking place'. Doing so allows us to move from matter simply being transported from raw material to thing, to maker and material engaging in a process of wayfaring (Ingold 2007a, 104), finding their own way, albeit with an approximate destination in mind. Sedimentation is a dynamic process. Just as rocks are formed through the sorting and cementing of particles, so they are eroded as they enter into relations with water, microbes or climatic conditions. Strata await de-coding and de-stratification (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 187). Objects are the same – no sooner does our brooch leave its mould than it enters into relations which de-code it and de-stratify it; it is exposed to agents of decay, it is circulated as a cultural object. Because form is an ordering of material our brooch remains vibrant, although a coagulation of flows it is itself a slowly moving flow, to return to Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 477) again:

To follow the flow of matter is to itinerate . . . It is always a flow that is followed, even if the flow is not always that of matter

This notion of itinerancy is captured in the recent considerations of object itineraries introduced in the previous chapter (Joyce and Gillespie 2015), in which things are seen to flow, accumulating meaning through the relations which they pass in and out of, with these relations setting things on trajectories. Although the artefact itself is the object of study, itinerancy is equally applicable to materials; the object in its preformed state, and the fragments into which it breaks. This is a powerful idea which will be returned to later in the chapter, but here it is instructive to think about the itinerancy of materials. This is most apparent in the case of pottery, where scientific analysis allows the sourcing of materials such as clay and temper. Analyses which show materials as coming from different places allow us to understand how processes of making expand beyond the skilled relations between maker and material. Gathering is a process through which meaningful relations accumulate between materials, places or people (see for example Jones 2002, 122–39; Jervis 2014, 114–8; Roddick 2015; Thomas 2004 219; Olsen 2010, 81–2 on gathering in Heidegger). These relations are not lost once the materials are transformed into a ceramic vessel, rather they accumulate in the object, perhaps determining the way that materials are manipulated (either because of their specific material properties or their emergent, associative, properties) and the ways in which objects might become enrolled in practice, including in ways which people may not be conscious of. This acknowledgement shows how associations are not lost, but sediment within things and travel with them. Materials are not neutral but have implications, which extend beyond the physical, for the ways that they are able to flow in their territorialised, stratified and intensive form as objects. As such, we can see objects as existing as materialisations of relations across multiple time spaces, as territorialisations of material and skill, but as deterritorialised at the molecular level through the diverse relations which constitute their component parts. It is, therefore, deterritorialisation at the molecular level which gives things their vibrancy as it is at this level that relations are intensified or brought to the foreground in ways which affect simultaneously material and social transformations.

So far this discussion has emphasised vibrancy and fluidity and it is here that we come up against the paradox of new materialism introduced in Chapter 2; how can we explain endurance and continuity in a world of fluidity and flux (Bennett 2010, 57)? The key to solving this paradox is to embrace movement. Firstly we should realise that materials are slow when compared to the pace of human life (Bennett 2010, 58); just because they are present it does not mean that they are stable. Annemarie Mol and John Law (1995, 279) call on us to imagine that materials are not things in themselves, but sets of relations. It is the differential persistence of these relations which generates relative durabilities; things are not permanent, but some are more durable than others, formed of stronger or more persistent relations, both in regard to the volatility of materials themselves and the different ways in which things are defined through their relations with people, materials and other things. Secondly we need to see objects not just as ‘things in themselves’ (strata) or as bundles of relations (assemblages) but as oscillating between these two states, and thirdly we must account for the slow pace of their materiality (Bennett 2010, 58).

A number of different approaches can be taken to think through this distinction. As highlighted in Chapter 2, Chris Fowler and Oliver Harris (2015) draw on the writing of Karen Barad to distinguish between ‘waves’, that is dynamic, unbounded bundles of relations which may be defracted (or deterritorialised) into multiple directions and ‘particles’, that is bounded entities in which our relations coalesce into a recognised thing. Such an approach might also be seen in Ingold’s (2007a, 85) distinction between the network of connected points (particles) and meshwork of entangled lines (waves). For Ingold (2007a) the network lends itself to ‘travel’ between known points or particularised entities (the brooch, the pot) whilst the meshwork lends itself to wayfaring, to mapping relations to understand how our forms of matter become things as they move across space-time; what he has termed a difference between joining *up* and joining *with* (Ingold 2016) (Key Concept 9). We might propose that these, in turn, relate to different levels of analysis.

Carl Knappett (2011) draws on Bill Brown’s Thing Theory to argue for a distinction between things (anonymous entities existing within a social milieu) and objects (things given meaning through their enrolment in social practice). For Knappett (2011, 189), the “world is neither a network of objects nor a meshwork of things. It is both, yet there is a tension between them, an ‘uneasy flicker’” (see also Bennett 2010, 4). This flicker might equate to the transition between wave and particle, or, in the terms of DeLanda (2016, 22–3) between strata and assemblage. For DeLanda strata are hierarchical networks; formed through processes of sedimentation and stratification, whereas assemblages are meshworks formed in a manner more like the fluid hardening which creates igneous rocks.

As Knappett (2011) and Elliot H. Blair (2015) show, investigation at the molecular scale of the relations which constitute things leads us in the direction of the meshwork and the mapping of itineraries, exploring processes of becoming. In contrast, investigations at the molar scale, of things as entities within other assemblages, lend themselves to a more network focussed approach, in which we reflect less on the relations which constitute things but the ways in which they are constitutive of larger wholes (see also Hodder and Mol 2016 for a comparison of network approaches and concepts of entanglement). This brings us back to the discussion in Chapter 2 of the relative strengths of assemblage thought and Actor-Network Theory (ANT), in which ANT, concerned with connections between things, is best suited to understanding stability, and assemblage thought, with its emphasis on fluidity and immanence is better suited to exploring potential transformation. Analysis therefore oscillates between these two states, things as assemblages and things as stratified components of other affective relational bundles and we can utilise the different tools available to work in these different registers.

These oscillations can be viewed in DeLanda’s terms as “phase transitions”, akin to the transformation from liquid to gas at a critical point (see Chapter 2). Importantly these transitions are not instantaneous but emerge from an incremental process of de-stratification and de-coding. Just as water and steam represent different phases of the chemical code H_2O , so things do not entirely lose their coherence in this process; objects can only be partially de-coded and de-stratified. To follow

Ingold (2007a), think of a thread – it may be woven into a mat or rolled into a ball, it may enter into any number of configurations but it retains its form as a thread by virtue of its material qualities, its surfaces, and it is their persistence which allow the thread to endure.

Ingold (2016, 13) criticises the perception that things “cohere only through an exterior contact or adhesion that leaves their inner natures more or less unaffected, and that can therefore be detached and reconfigured in other arrangements without loss”. Although the thread remains as a thread, it loses some of its ‘threadness’ when it is joined with other threads to form a mat or basket. However, this position implies that a thing exists only in one state. Within an assemblage perspective things can be multiple, “there is only one reality, but that reality is multiple in and of itself” (Buchanan 2015, 386). In other words, any thing can be both a thing in itself but also a component of other things, with a process of deterritorialisation occurring and causing one manifestation to have implications for others as it is ‘plugged in’ to other assemblages, or “wholes characterised by relations of exteriority” (DeLanda 2006, 10). Our thread may be transformed into a mat, but it is also still a thread, it carries with it the virtual capacity to work loose or to fray, for example. We see a change in the state of the thread, but it is still recognisable as the actualisation of a process of ‘threading’. This is a critical component of the concept of object itineraries, as things are constituted of more-than-material relations they are not re-born with every engagement but carry relationships with them and it is these accretions of relations which might limit or produce the virtual capacities which can be actualised through a process of assemblage. In other words, the trajectories of action into which things are implicated, are historically contingent (Joyce 2015) – contingent on the actualised effects of past relations and the ways that these code desire, or the forms of virtual capacity which might be actualised as a quality of a given thing.

Let’s return to our Roman brooch. It emerges from the mould as a hardened, stratified and sedimented coagulation of coded flows. It is also a part of what Jones (2012, 138) terms an “extended assemblage” (or an assemblage at a different scale) of objects produced from the same mould; a part of a group emerging from practice, but not the same as these objects. It is an actualisation of the process of metallurgy and, as such, is a stratification of this process. But it is also an unformed flow, a Body without Organs, with virtual capacities which are actualised through relations, transforming it into multiple things; it remains a stratification of metallurgy but also becomes actualised as different things through processes of material assembly (Gillespie 2015, 47). For example, flows of money may cause our brooch to be stratified as a commodity, but equally this virtual capacity may not be actualised. Flows of social knowledge may code it as a symbol of status. It might be argued that it is the recognition of virtual capacities, the identification of particular relations and their implications and potential which binds people and things in communities of practice, in which knowledgeable relations with materials and things are a medium for drawing people together (see Harris 2014; Blair 2015; Roddick 2015). If a stratum is both highly coded and highly territorialised, then

de-stratification is both a process of deterritorialisation and de-coding. As it lies idle in a jewellery box it remains a stratification of metallurgy, but also becomes de-stratified, losing some of its associations and becoming an anonymous thing. As it is forgotten, it may become deterritorialised from assemblages of status signification, it may find new uses when re-encountered as ways of wearing the brooch are forgotten about, a process of de-coding. But, at the same time, it remains stratified as a personal possession. It does not follow a straightforward, linear biography. It is an artefact with its own temporality. The slow corrosion of the material and its form may be arrested through care or accelerated through wear as the brooch is deterritorialised, quite literally pulled apart, by its relations with the atmosphere, its qualities as a symbol of gender or status will re-surface through social interaction (its participation in communities of practice), its role as a personal possession is contingent on a historical process of acquisition. The brooch is itinerant, passing in and out of relations, revealing and concealing itself. The brooch may be buried in a grave, giving it some metaphysical significance as a part of a burial ritual, a significance which is slowly de-coded as its material presence outlives the network of associations which caused this transition and our brooch is forgotten; as it ceases to be an object of memory it is free to become other things – it comes to inhabit a smoother space (Mol and Law 1995, 280). It may decay, its form slowly being lost (a process of deterritorialisation through which the material is pulled into relations with the atmosphere, a process of over-coding as the material overflows the striations imposed by behaviours of care and curation, and a process of de-stratification as it loses its material form), transformed by the elements not back into its original state but into a different material configuration. The brooch was recovered by a metal detectorist and reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme¹ (ID LVPL-25C7DC) and was then analysed, a process through which the brooch was gradually particularised, becoming a particular archaeological ‘type’ (a Hod Hill type) but, simultaneously, an assemblage of relations; it is at once a stratum (archaeological type) and assemblage (a bundle of relations which unravel through close study of this individual thing). Crucially then, the ‘life’ of an object is non-linear. One thing can become many objects, things enter different, but connected, modes of becoming; things are itinerant as they pass through these transitions; progressing like rhizomes on a messy path across a space-time striated by the constraints of material properties and historical relationships which might act to constrain particular lines of flight or trajectories of becoming, but smooth enough for our brooch to flow, occasionally being stratified and coded by relations, only to be de-stratified and become something (or some things) else.

As Bjornar Olsen (2010, 147) points out, a shared affordance of things is their persistence. This is a function of their material properties, but their persistence is more than their form. Things have pasts, they are accretions of past relations, lingering residues of action which continue to code; they have messy temporalities (Olsen *et al* 2012, 137). As we have seen from our brooch, things do not simply belong to one temporal period, but can ‘become contemporary’ (Lucas 2015). Things follow trajectories and accumulate new properties; their passage through

time-space becomes coded by the networks of which they were once a part, they never become completely free as they would be formless materials; we are brought back to the idea that things are mixtures, part stratified, part de-stratified; occupying a space which may be smooth-ish, but remains striated, a mixture which is characteristic of the assemblage itself. As Deleuze (1966, 59) states:

the past and the present do not denote two successive moments, but two elements which coexist: one is the present which does not cease to pass and the other is the past, which does not cease to be, but through which all presents pass

Objects as congealed flows are presences which other flows must pass through or around, they are residues of past action with implications for the potential futures which might unfold, as Deleuze states (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, 28) “what matters on a path, what matters on a line, is always the middle, not the beginning or the end. We are always in the middle of a path, in the middle of something”. As Ingold (2007b) highlights, archaeological methodology; the categorisation of artefacts into types, privileges form over process. It creates a straight line between that first stratum of the finished object and the archaeological type. As Knappett (2011, 189–90) states: “We seek to control the material world and bring it into our systems of understanding, but at the same time the phenomenal world resists this process . . .” In order to reflect on this problem, it is necessary to think about typologies as assemblages in themselves.

Mapping object flows

Typology is a means of ordering artefacts chronologically and on the basis of similarities in form. It is a central and well established weapon in the archaeologist’s arsenal for tackling the core questions which frame the discipline. The artefact categories which emerge from a process of analysis are often perceived as being neutral, but they are immensely problematic. To paraphrase Steven Hinchcliffe *et al* (2005, 652), to say that we are generating a faithful representation of archaeological objects assumes that archaeological objects, as archaeological objects, are there to be represented; “they are effectively, self-identical species that can be counted . . . that are expected to look the same at the start of the process as they did at the end”. What they are calling on us to do is to be open to ontological difference and complexity. Hinchcliffe *et al* are actually talking about water voles, but their insights, that through categorisation we homogenise in ways which deny the potential for difference, have a strong resonance with archaeological practice; as Jones (2012, 105) states: “difference is suppressed in archaeological analysis to retain a semblance of order and stability . . . fixed and stable categories therefore underpin semiotic analyses of artefacts”. By necessity, typology always relates to the production of objects, carrying a tacit assumption that a particular type of object was produced, probably for a specific purpose, as Van Oyen (2013, 89) argues,

this is problematic as it suggests that we are dealing with ‘types already produced’; within a pre-existing scheme, a known end. As Jones (2017, 87) points out, “it is a fallacy to assume that prehistoric people operated with a corpus of designs of the kind compiled by the contemporary scholar”. This essentialist methodology leads to the discovery “through logical analysis [of] the enduring properties that characterise those products, and then makes these sets of properties into a defining essence” (DeLanda 2006, 28), making types ‘reified generalities’. If we accept that meaning occurs at intersections between people and things then typologies are little more than relational categories, not false but also not essential or absolute (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 7; Fowler 2017 96–7). We have seen, however, that things are mobile and fluid, that their itineraries are open ended and that they flow as rhizomes in unpredictable ways. Therefore the ontological status of things, as assemblages, is as single and unique individuals (DeLanda 2006, 28). Assemblages are, and consist of, individual singularities which emerge through process and change with process; as Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 22–3) put it:

A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. . . [Plateaus] designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end. . . It is a regrettable characteristic of the Western mind to relate expressions and actions to exterior or transcendent ends, instead of evaluating them on a plane of consistency on the basis of their intrinsic value.

Therefore, typologies, as a scheme of ‘types already produced’ gives the speculative and potentially false assumption that the types we identify in analysis were also the types intended by the producers of those objects and that form is a defining and stable characteristic of an artefact (see Bennett 2010, 79). Types and archaeological categories cannot be seen as directly analogous to each other, both emerge from particular processes of working on things. Typological work may translate some of the enduring qualities of things but not others; it is one set of relations, part of the bricolage of the multiple object, which exists as a combination of accrued relations from different places and times in which certain capacities may be surfaced or remain latent in the object (Fowler 2017).

Take, for example, the 11th–12th century CE Ramey Incised Jars (Figure 3.2A), probably made at the Mississippian centre of Cahokia. These vessels are a congealment of clay and shell, of skill and power (their decoration seemingly being linked to the cosmological order and the mechanisms of authority; Figure 3.2B) (Pauketat and Emerson 1991; Pauketat 2004, 85–6). Through analysis of their form, decoration and fabric they are identified as being distinct from other vessel types, but this carries an implicit assumption that they are all the same, causing us to treat these objects in a specific way (Jones 2012, 189). Analysis, a process of assemblage, homogenises these vessels, making them able to stand in for one another (Gillespie 2015, 53). Yet the wide distribution of these vessels and variations

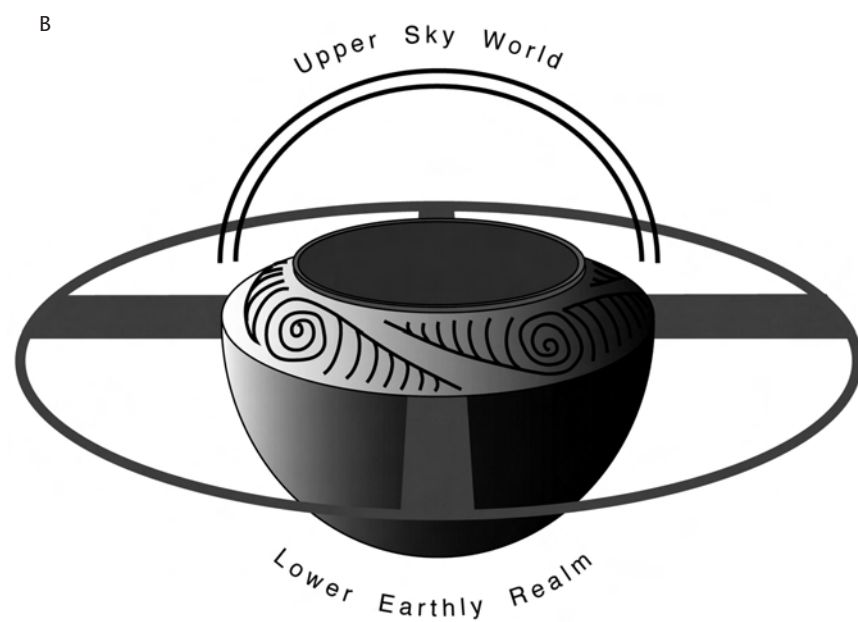


FIGURE 3.2 A: Ramey Incised Jar. B: Diagrammatic representation of the cosmos as depicted on a Ramey Incised Jar. Images: Illinois State Archaeological Survey, reproduced with permission.

in their size suggests that these vessels, whilst perhaps acquired through elite networks, had different itineraries, they flowed in different ways; “once these vessels were removed from their administrative center(s) – passed on to the non-elite households – their ritual meanings decreased and they entered the mundane world of the utilitarian container” (Pauketat and Emerson 1991, 924).

This is not to say that typological methods are of no use, but to highlight that we need to be aware of their implications. In order to do so it is fruitful to think about what kind of assemblage a typology is. Imagine a pottery specialist working through a pile of sherds, making decisions about whether or not an object is of a particular type (Figure 3.3). The boundaries of types are always fuzzy, there are always things at the margins which are hard to classify. Van Oyen (2013) draws on Law and Mol’s (1994) use of the idea of fluids to argue that types are not firm categories but, rather, that things exist as a continuum, constantly in flux with similarities and dissimilarities which are foregrounded through different engagements, in a manner similar to the meshwork described by DeLanda (1997); that is these sherds inhabit a relatively smooth space, striated by their material (ceramic) and the fact that they come from a specific archaeological site or context. These archaeological objects provide the sub-strata from which a typology emerges (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 56–7). The term ‘sub-strata’ is not intended to imply a lack of complexity in the patterning of material culture, but rather that they are the residues of previous sorting-cementation processes undertaken during the manufacture, use and discard of the vessel. The ceramic fabric might be seen as a sub-stratum, a stratification of space time, which make particular trajectories of stratification (perhaps the identification of a vessel as a cooking vessel) and assemblage possible and others not. It remains with the vessel and carries with it actual properties, for example thermal shock resistance, the actualisation, through the intensive process of pottery manufacture and resource selection, of a virtual idea that vessels should withstand heating. Yet it has further potential awaiting enactment, for example the formation of relation with petrological microscopes which might reveal information about the past activities which brought the vessel into being and the wider relations of which it was a part, the capacity for vessels to contribute to the writing of archaeological narratives emerging from this relationship (Joyce 2015, 36). It is through this process that a ceramic pot becomes ontologically different to a glass or metal one, or a brooch becomes different from a bracelet; things exist as sedimentations of sub-strata as remnants of the over-coding through which their past relationships persist; as Henri Bergson (1998, 4) states, the past “gnaws into the future and swells its advances” – that is objects “accumulate(s) and sediment . . . according to material trajectories that are beyond human control and wilful selection, creating the enormously rich and palimpsestal present we encounter every day” (Olsen 2010, 126).

This is what the ceramicist encounters when they are confronted with a heap of pottery, undifferentiated and spread across the table. Material which has outlived the networks from which it was formed and used, de-coded and able to be sorted in a myriad of ways but retaining some of the traces (e.g. its find spot, chemical



FIGURE 3.3 A pile of unsorted pottery. Image: Ben Jervis.

or physical alteration) of these past modes of existence (Schiffer 1999, 53); it is an assemblage which might become stratified in any number of ways. It is only through the enrolment of these sherds in typological assemblages (the actualisation of a virtual capacity to be sorted) that they come to be particular types; sherds of a Ramey Incised Jar *could* become something entirely different (see Fowler 2017, 97). What we can observe in the pottery specialist's work is a double articulation, a process of sedimentation; of sorting and cementing as sherds are divided up and held together by flows of knowledge, stored in publications or online databases and enacted through the practice of pottery analysis. This process of categorisation is, therefore, one of stratification; typologies are strata, hierarchical networks in which sherds are territorialised into categories coded by a history of research. These are types which exist outside of the things themselves, essentially prior to analysis – they are imposed upon the flow of objects coming from the ground. If a bag of pottery is a Body without Organs, types are the strata which form on it.

Typologies are, therefore, black-boxed (to use Latour's term) processes of categorisation, which emerge from particular engagements with objects, undertaken with a particular aim and privileging particular characteristics. Typological thinking is not a mistake, but rather the result of one set of interventions with the material. We rely on these processes of categorisation, which we trust as having some link to the past societies that we are studying, to make order from this mess.

They are enrolled in archaeological discourse, framing future enquiry, creating the potential for research into a particular ‘type’ and bringing assumptions about the periodisation, function and cultural affiliation of particular elements of the archaeological record. Ramey Incised Jars, for example, are seen as being associated with the authority of Cahokia and a Mississippian worldview in the 11th–12th centuries, probably used as containers for foods or medicines given out during rituals at Cahokia (Pauketat 2004, 84–7). Whilst an average vessel was likely used for this, this does not mean to say that all were at all times; the reality was considerably messier. Types therefore exist as a way of creating order out of the messiness which is the reality of our interactions with things and materials. To an extent this is unproblematic, as long as we are critical in our use of typology, aware of the ways in which it can code enquiry and alive to the possibilities of alternative ways of engaging with these objects. Typological schemes, as representations of things, are not separate to things, but are one translation of them, one of a multiple ways in which they become objects and active processes with implications which resonate from engagement with this relationship between thing and representation (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 12). It is impractical to throw the baby out with the typological bathwater, but we must understand typologies for what they are; assemblages of objects and knowledge, the products of territorialisation, which code archaeological practice and which are deterritorialised through their circulation in archaeological literature. Furthermore, typologies are themselves the result of historical processes of research, limited by the knowledge and techniques available at particular times. As we become able to classify objects in new ways, be that by their material composition or the analysis of microwear patterns, as well as shape and function, so new objects are able to emerge out of analysis. This is not to say that they are not real, just that they are not the only manifestations of these objects.

A further ordering mechanism is the periodisation of categories. Types, Vesa Pekka Herva *et al* (2004, 15) state, are compatible with the writing of grand narratives. The average artefacts which stand for typological categories in turn relate to specific blocks of linear time, allowing them to easily be incorporated into our stories, representing particular functions or affiliations, as we have seen with the Ramey Incised Jars. Such periodisation has evolutionary undertones, implying that objects and societies develop towards complexity. This is in contradiction to the contention that objects have temporalities that are non-linear and that it is the ‘middles’, the object processes, rather than some external or existential ‘end’ which matters (Fowler 2017, 103; Crellin 2017). DeLanda (1997, 15–16) argues that human history does not consist of “progressive, developmental steps, each better than the previous one, and indeed leaving the previous one behind. On the contrary . . . each new human phase simply added itself to the other ones, co-existing and interacting with them without leaving them in the past”.

Rather than occupying a genealogical tree, objects follow “a series of interlaced trails” (Ingold 2007a, 122). Whereas typology implies a corpus of types the reality is that emergence is much more open ended, objects do not follow a linear evolutionary path but emerge as mixtures of skill, innovative ideas, borrowings and

regressions, as might be seen in the making of hybrid pots in the American Bottom as Mississippian and local Late Woodland cultures came into contact in the 11th and 12th centuries (Pauketat 2004, 129). Although archaeological types emerge from analysis they are ordered in such a way as to mask this fluidity, suggesting discrete rather than messy groupings, and suggest movement towards an ideal form rather than a tendency to variation, built on approximations, the adaptation of learnt skill and half-remembered interactions with vessels in different times and places (see Jones 2017).

This is a point well made by Van Oyen (2013) in her analysis of Sigillata pottery in Roman Gaul. She highlights that continuity and change are complex processes and different artefactual sequences may be suggestive of alternative trajectories of becoming, rather than distinct and marked processes of change or episodes of continuity. She shows how Gaulish Sigillata was modelled on an undeveloped version of Italian Sigillata and that its failure to develop in the same way as the Italian ‘prototype’ is a result of the particular social milieu in which these ceramic vessels were made rather than simply being representative of a failure to adopt new Italian tastes; to quote DeLanda (1997, 16): “. . . much as a given material may solidify in alternative ways . . . so humanity liquefied and later solidified in different forms . . . alternative stable states were possible, and one actualized, they coexisted and interacted with each other”. By recognising typologies as strata we can come to realise that the categories that we impose on the past are colonial. They create a hierarchy of objects, they attach meaning, significance and assumptions to things and create an archaeological record on our terms. They are the result of the enrolment of objects in a particular community of practice, consisting of relations with analytical equipment, circulating archaeological knowledge and archaeological practitioners (Blair 2015). But as strata typological categories can be seen as one ‘mode of existence’ for any object (Van Oyen 2013, 97): things exist *as* archaeological types *but not only as* archaeological types. Whilst challenging, if we follow Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987, 187) instructions it is also a methodological opportunity: “lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them. . .” They tell us that “staying stratified is not the worst that can happen” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 187) – what we are to do then is to accept our types as a starting point, as a safe place to stand, a place to which we can return, and experiment, explore how stratified objects might become deterritorialised, follow potential links. If we characterise our work with objects as the mapping of ‘object itineraries’ – the ways in which things come to rest or are active, circulate and move, we do not need to start at the beginning of an object’s life but can map them from the location in which we encounter them (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 3). I am not denying that Ramey Incised Jars exist, but instead acknowledging them as a stratum which we can decode, to explore how individual vessels were this type, but also became other objects, as is suggested in their transition from symbolically loaded container to mundane domestic vessel, for example.

In making their distinction between trees and rhizomes Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 11–12) distinguish between different types of cartography; tracing and mapping. Archaeological classification is a process of tracing; objects are “crystallized into codified complexes. . . Its goal is to describe a *de facto* state. . . to explore an unconscious that is already there from the start, lurking in the dark recesses of memory”. This process can be likened to Ingold’s (2007a, 79–81) idea of transporting; transportation is “destination-oriented”, the “transported traveller becomes a passenger who does not himself move but is rather moved from place to place”. In other words, by being sorted into assigned types, things are transported, form and meaning imposed upon them.

In contrast, mapping relates to the rhizome, it is a productive process: “The map is open and connectable in all its dimensions. . . A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing which always comes ‘back to the same’. The map has to do with performance. . .” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 12). Maps can be likened to Ingold’s (2007a, 78–80) concept of wayfaring; things are constantly on the move with no final destination, leaving traces and adding to the map. The study of archaeological objects becomes a process of translation; categorisation translates maps into images or tracings, neutralising things – it is a working backwards from a destination which is not final (Ramey Incised Jars are categorised on the basis of form, decoration and material created during manufacture; the moment of congealment but not a ceasing of their material flow), whereas mapping allows us to follow the flows of itinerant objects. Mapping allows us to engage with a becoming world, not to trace objects as ready formed, but to continually produce things through our engagement with them and our understanding of past interactions; the objects we identify as archaeological ‘types’ do not exist prior to this analysis, in a sense there are “no Ramey Incised Jars, just Ramey incised jars yet to come” (after Harris 2005, 58). Typology allows us to leave one trace, to find our way into a map, from which we can de-code the objects, allowing us to roam with them to in a smoother space where apparently similar individual vessels might become different things, or a single vessel become multiple as it itinerates through multiple sets of relations. An instructive parallel can be drawn from Deleuze and Guattari’s later (1994, 179–81) work where they argue that painters depict the body as a house, the flesh being an interface between the ‘cosmos-universe’ and the protected territory within. A tracing approach to typological analysis can be seen as retreating to that protected territory, leading to a “deadening repetition” of archaeological types (Lorraine 2005, 161) whereas mapping allows us to step outside of the ‘house’, to open a reality beyond the typology, but still allowing us to retreat there. My point is methodological as much as ontological; we need to be aware that methods make realities (see also Chapter 5) rather than reproducing them. Such an awareness takes us outside of our protective skin, creating potential for multiple realities and multiple becomings, for a schizo- rather than singular- analysis which maps the itineraries of objects, better enabling us to comprehend the complex sets of relations which objects make.

We have, in the concept of the object biography (see Chapter 2) a tool for writing an account of these itinerant movements, provided that we remember that

the process of studying objects is a way of ontologising them; that our biographies are limited by the visibility of past movements and relations which can be captured through particular engagements – not a work of fiction, but always fractured and incomplete (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 5). If we return to the idea as conceived by Igor Kopytoff (1986), object biography is about understanding transitions, principally the process of commoditisation, which can be seen as a phase transition, and can be written from different perspectives. As a way of writing, biography lends itself to documenting object itineraries, it is a way of documenting a process of mapping, of plotting a route but being aware that at every turn there are other options (virtual capacities); that the destination is not pre-determined but emerges from the journey. To use objects therefore we must tack between stratified types and de-stratified objects, use our categories not as definitive labels, but as starting points, entries in to the vibrant worlds that these things allow us to make, this is how archaeologists “do not discover the past. . . [but] work on what is left of the past” (Shanks 2007, 591). If archaeological analysis is one way of ontologising objects, then an analogous process is the writing about objects in the past. The next section therefore considers how we can work on both the objects and documents left from the past.

Text and objects

We have seen that the process of sorting, categorising and writing about archaeological objects makes them specific iterations of themselves, that archaeological analysis is not a process of passive reflection of the past, but an active and productive process. We can develop this idea further by thinking about the intersection between things and other types of text, focussing on the later medieval period as an example. From the 13th century across western Europe we see an increase in documentation relating to the possessions of individuals and households, including wills and inventories. It is tempting to see the inventory as a reflection, a snapshot, of the possessions of a household. We might consider the household as a territorialised, stratified entity, which is traced in textual form in the process of inventory creation. We know, however, that inventories are incomplete records of household possessions. Certain goods, which we encounter in the archaeological record, are omitted from them, revealing inventorying as a performance of rules, conventions and systems of value. Recent approaches to the study of medieval inventorying practices (Jervis 2014; Wilson 2015; Smail 2016) draw on the writing of Latour in particular to consider how inventorying is more of a cartographic process, in which relations which emerge in the performance or encounter of inventorying become textualised and, rather than reflecting the material possessions of a household, these documents instead become transformative, particularly for the objects which they contain. Jervis *et al* (2015) take a biographical approach, seeing the process of inventorying as one of transformation, in which things become actualised as something else, moving from possession to commodity for example. However, if we draw on the idea of object itinerary, we can take a subtly different perspective, not

seeing the inventory as only transformational, but also allowing an iteration of the object as possession to live on in a textualised form.

We have then already made the leap from seeing the inventory as a static reflection to being a constituent of a performative and transformative process (see also Semple and Jervis forthcoming). We can explore these ideas in a little more detail by reference to a particular example. At some point between November 1397 and November 1399 William Hamptshire, a fishmonger of the small town of Great Marlow (Buckinghamshire) drowned himself in the River Thames. As a suicide, his possessions were forfeited to the crown and an official, the Royal Escheator, was tasked with drawing up a list of these possessions and determining their value:

Total £10 10s.

8 sheep, 12d. each

4 pigs, 3s. 4d. each

2 quarters of salt [*sal'*], 3s. 2d. each

in cash, £6 4s.

6 bunches of?garlic (*bunch' alei*), 4d. per 'Bunch'

1 cow, 8s.

6 qrtrs 3 bus wheat, 34s.

1 silver spoon (*coclear argent*), 9d.

1 brass pot, 4s. 9d.

1 horse, 10s.

There are two ways that we can look at this list. We might see it as a representation of a stratified whole, a tracing. From this perspective the household is a stratum, a sedimentation of goods, the house and its inhabitants (both human and animal). But we might take a different perspective, as seeing each of these objects as flowing, coagulating in the household, their flow as commodities having been coded by marketing practices and conventions of ownership. From this perspective these objects flow through the document, the inventory becomes an assemblage, a process of territorialisation. The process of writing and recording becomes one of stratification. A system of value is "black boxed" in this process of inscription, interrupting into future performances of valuation as circulating knowledge. If we see the inventory as an assemblage, the household becomes de-stratified, it becomes a Body without Organs – these goods lose their identity as possessions as the relations through which they were possessed disappeared when William drowned himself. They have virtual capacities to become something else, what Kopytoff terms a "commodity potential" (1986, 65), and this is actualised through their territorialisation and stratification into a regime of value by the inventory as assemblage, or desiring machine. But this is not a simple process of transition in a biographical sense; we can perceive of a process of 'braiding' of material flows, as the inventory textualises past relationships (as possessions) whilst simultaneously actualising commodity potential. The inventory was encountered during a research project into the material culture of medieval households (Jervis *et al* 2015) and through this

research the objects in the inventory do not just represent the objects, they *are* the objects themselves in a textual form, they are not lost as possessions, but are able to re-emerge, interrupting into the present just as archaeological objects do.

Medieval matter, Kellie Robertson (2010, 115) proposes, was perceived of as a combination of material and immaterial. She argues that the medieval period is missing from narratives of materialist philosophies, with it sitting in a 'pre-modern' phase which is principally associated with classical antiquity. As we have already explored in Chapter 1, there is no single 'pre-modern' ontology or form of materialism, and within medieval literature debates over the nature of matter do occur, principally in attempts to mediate between Aristotelian and Biblical views of the world (Robertson 2010, 105). Therefore, in exploring object worlds of the Middle Ages we need to be open to alternative ideas of materialism, to be alive to alternative conceptualisations of the material which might exist. She closes by arguing that contemporary materialism has to be historicised by medieval materialism (Robertson 2010, 115) and one way of achieving this is to think about the potential of exploring what medieval objects and texts actually did.

The idea that objects flowed through documents is also put forward by Robertson (2008, 1073). She suggests that these movements have implications both for writer and reader. Her focus is on literature and the ways in which objects do not simply represent a character or situation but serve to constitute that character. Such an approach calls on us to adopt a relational view of the material but also of the individual and to question the ontological primacy of form or selfhood. In other words, we can question whether inventories are documenting a world of objects which is 'out there' or whether it is constructing this world through a particular process of translation. Inventories capture objects 'on the move' (Smail 2016, 11) and mediate a process of transformation. The use of language to describe goods has implications for the 'lines of flight' that things might take; an object listed as 'broken' or 'worn' might be recycled, whilst other goods might be sold on as commodities in their own right (Smail 2016, 70); whilst we are seeing a process of description we are also seeing one of production, in which objects exist as more-than-material forms; their textual existence having implications for the trajectory of the actualised object.

A notable object in William Hamptsshire's inventory is the silver spoon, valued at 9d. Such objects are rarely encountered in the archaeological record. Analysis of probate inventories from medieval urban households by Peter Goldberg (2008) suggests that items such as silver spoons were acquired for their functional and symbolic value, but also as stores of wealth. If we view the inventory as a transformation and a process of commoditisation (Johnson 1996, 112), then we can see the inventory as a "desiring machine" actualising this virtual capacity of the object. A similar point has been made by Daniel Smail (2016, 64–5), who equates wealth with energy and perceives of goods as stores of wealth (or energy) released in times of stress. This approach finds parallels with DeLanda's (1997) emphasis on energy flows and the role of assemblages as a transformation of these flows into something else. It is worth pausing here to reflect that although desire is not a particular trope

in DeLanda's work, this notion of flows of energy might be equated to this concept; indeed because energy is never lost it is a valuable means of thinking about flows as even in their actualised form these objects continue to flow as energy is converted into affect.

So far I have proposed that inventories are assemblages. They serve to territorialise and code a Body without Organs, the goods of a medieval household, which flow through the home, constituting the molar household but still persisting as vibrant molecular entities in themselves. These objects are not reflected in texts but flow through them, with this process of assemblage having implications for the trajectories of the objects, but also capturing their past and allowing this to irrupt in future interactions with the documents themselves. Because the objects persist in the documents, we can also perceive of the texts as deterritorialised through these objects; the objects have their own lives, they become entangled beyond the text and therefore cause the text to have effects which extend beyond the document itself.

In later medieval Ghent (Belgium) an economic change was occurring. The increasing commercialisation of the economy introduced the potential for capitalist relations, with implications for how objects were encountered and understood. In exploring this documentary evidence, Martha Howell (2010) argues that we cannot trace a linear development towards a known capitalist end point, but instead can perceive of small scale legal, financial and administrative performances accruing as bricolage and leading to incremental changes. One such change occurred in how goods could be passed on at death. Traditionally a division existed between moveable goods (alienable possessions which could be monetised) and immovable goods (inalienable possessions passed on through patrimony), the latter group typically including possessions such as land and the home (Howell 2010, 53–6). As commercial relations increased in intensity this traditional way of categorising property was challenged and broke down, spaces opened up for the commoditisation of immovable possessions, in other words for them to become moveable. Such categorisations are recorded in documentation and this process of textualisation served to secure the status of goods, both allowing change to be managed by the civic authorities and also creating a means through which social structures could persist (Howell 2010, 79). In his ethnography of the modern French legal system, Latour (2010) shows how recorded judgements are meaningless in themselves, but as they are enrolled in legal practices they 'become legal', as the judgements are acted out as precedents – the law, for Latour, is a bundle of relationships or an Actor-Network. Here we can see a similar process, which we might view in terms of deterritorialisation, as documents and goods itinerate through administrative and financial practices, not to simply document but with very real implications for the ways that futures unfold.

Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 257–76) explore this process in a less empirical way when they discuss the emergence of capitalism, arguing that commerce serves to de-stratify flows (they provide the example of feudalism). Flows of property and money breakdown structures, gradually smoothing coded spaces, and over-coding

previous structures, money being a particular deterritorialisation of wealth. This breaking down of persistent systems is what is documented by Howell in medieval Ghent in empirical terms; capitalism did not emerge fully formed but emerged through long term processes of breaking down, smoothing and over-coding. It is this process that we see in the documentary evidence; not in the sense of providing a record but as providing the very stuff of this smoothing and re-coding of flows of goods. A further example provided by Howell (2010, 158) is the monetisation of gifts, which allowed social bonds to be quantified, fundamentally altering the way in which honour, gratitude and loyalty were expressed in material form.

By exploring the relationship between texts and things we have revealed inventories to be more complex than simple lists of items. They have implications for things themselves, things circulate or itinerate through them and also serve to deterritorialise text, making it a contributor to history rather than a simple record of it. It has been proposed that, just as in archaeological analysis, things are constructed through categorisation and may persist in other forms, awaiting actualisation through their enrolment in practice. In the next section we can explore the itinerancy of objects and the multiple nature of their reality.

Itinerant objects and assemblage convertors

So far it has been shown how objects and materials may be classified in different ways which are inherently relational, with their role and performance characteristics emerging from relations. The aim of this case study is to explore not only the itinerant nature of objects but to begin to think about the vibrancy of their materials and the ways in which things might work across scales.

The objects in question are a series of models currently housed in the Hôtel National des Invalides in Paris and the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille (Figure 3.4).

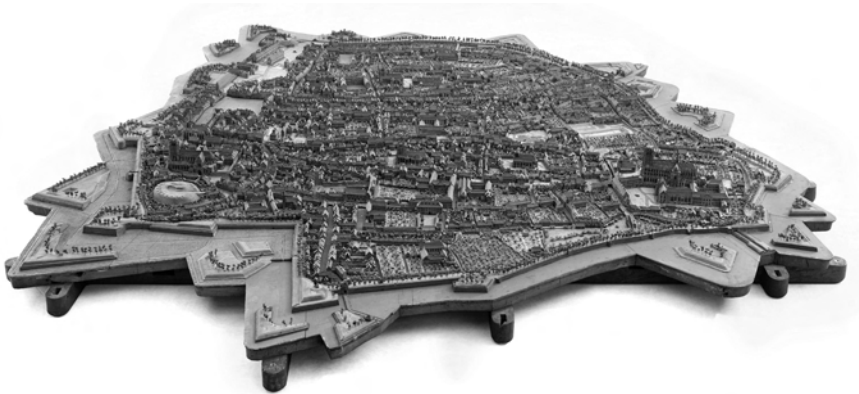


FIGURE 3.4 Plan relief of the town of Satin-Omer, Pas-de-Calais, France. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / René-Gabriel Ojéda, reproduced with permission.

The models, constructed between the 1660s and the mid 19th century, depict towns and forts in France and in the countries around its borders. These models fit into a tradition of military model building in early modern Europe (Buisseret 1998, 125–8) and were initially intended as a tool to allow the King of France to inspect the defences of his border towns and to understand their geography within the context of a military campaign. The objects are literally itinerant, having had several homes throughout their existence, but are also itinerant in the terms of recent work in archaeological theory (Joyce and Gillespie 2015) in that as they moved they were drawn into relations and became multiple things. By understanding how the constitution of these objects changed as they were drawn into new relations we can understand the different ways that these objects work as “knowledge making devices” or “epistemological tools” (Perry 2013, 284; 293).

Studies of miniature objects often focus on the representational, which can have the effect of downplaying practice. Indeed, the very concept of miniaturisation implies the presence of a larger version; miniature objects “epitomize, echo and reverberate meanings captured in and associated with other objects, while creating new meanings of their own” (Foxhall 2015, 1). A focus on the representational masks the open-endedness of interactions with the material and the ways in which representations may change or act back (Back-Danielsson 2013, 326; 335). In relation to Renaissance maps, Bernhard Klein (2017, 65) discusses how cartography changes perceptions of the world, allowing land and structures of power to be visualised and perceived of in new ways, as Douglass Bailey (2005, 34) states miniatures have “the ability to create and allow access to alternative worlds”. We might see this when considering the impetus for the manufacture of these models, which came in 1668 when France acquired a number of frontier towns through the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, with models offering a means of showing what works had to be undertaken to fortify these settlements (Buisseret 1998, 129).² As such the models were always intended to be more-than-representational; they captured, in a great deal of detail, the natural and settlement topography of these towns in miniature, and became active participants in distant decision making processes about how these places should be developed to enhance their defensive capability; we might say that they work to condense the significance of these places (after Bailey 2005, 32–3; Jones 2012, 53; 57). That said, the process of miniaturisation is necessarily selective (Bailey 2005, 29; Meskell 2015, 11) and the features reconstructed and the level of details of these models is an actualisation of a particular form of desire, that to defend and protect; effectively to actualise power over these places.

In the context of modern urban geography, Colin McFarlane (2011a, 116) has coined the term “mobile urbanism” to show how urban policy making emerges from the circulation of ideas in the form of documents and maps, with ideas being transferred between cities, adopted and manipulated to fit in with local concerns. We can see these models as a form of mobile urbanism which form a part of a wider assemblage which exists across scales. This assemblage consists of the towns and models themselves, military knowledge, weaponry and urban defensive schemes from other towns across Europe, which, at this

time were undergoing comprehensive changes in response to the growth of artillery. These models therefore do more than mediate dialogue between the King and his advisors and a particular location in the landscape. Rather they function as ‘assemblage convertors’, which fold scales together and create the potential for affective associations to be drawn between distant places and disparate sets of ideas. To a certain degree all objects can be thought of as such (e.g. Harris 2013), but it is particularly explicit in the case of these models. Furthermore scale is defined relationally; it is through difference and juxtaposition that these models and the towns that they represent can at once be seen as the same and different (see Jones 2012, 52 on these “choreographies of scale” in a prehistoric context). Assemblage convertors interrupt or interfere with the dialectical relationship between the forms of expression and content which constitute the assemblage (Buchanan 2015, 391), shifting perspectives and understanding, by disrupting the relationship of reciprocity between matter and expression which emerges through the process of assemblage. Through a process of miniaturisation ideas and knowledge were made mobile, with agency for the development of particular forms of defensive scheme emerging through this cross-scalar interaction. As such we can question the boundary between the models as representations of the towns and the towns themselves (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 12), as interactions with the model resonated in the landscape of the town itself, the model becoming a part of the distributed performance of urban life; urban life becomes more than that which goes on in the physical site of the town itself (see discussion in Chapter 4). Ontologically, if we accept the models as more-than-representational and as having a role in shaping the towns themselves it becomes necessary to see the models not as simply standing for the towns but as ontologically equivalent to them.

The models were initially housed in the Palace of Tuileries, but in 1715 they were moved to the Grande Galerie of the Louvre palace. This was a long room built by Henry IV and was a grand setting in which these models could be laid out and inspected (Buisseret 1998, 129). Here the models could still be used for their original defensive function but, through their situation within an extravagant area of the royal palace, obtained a further function as prestige objects. The models were viewed by visitors from other countries and stimulated the manufacture of similar models elsewhere, for example in Russia, Turkey and Italy (Buisseret 1998, 129). Here we can see how, through being placed into a bundle of relations, the meanings of objects might fundamentally change; from effectively being instruments of political power they came to mediate influence and build prestige. This is a process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, the models being deterritorialised beyond the court and reterritorialised in imitations as standing for relations with it. This is more than saying that meaning is contextual because these objects are not mere representations, they are not stages on which diplomatic relations play out, but are a component of a factory producing these relations. If we acknowledge that meaning emerges at the intersection of people and things (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 7) it becomes obvious that the status of these objects was not an inherent property

of them but emerged from their role in mediating the various activities of the royal court, both a concern with defence and with entertaining, influencing and impressing foreign visitors. In this case the models well illustrate Joyce's (2015, 25) point that objects enter relations on a trajectory, carrying relations with them. These models entered the Louvre essentially as military tools and were transformed by the relations into which they entered, which, in turn, opened new potential for them to resonate more widely, for example in their reproduction in other courts across Europe. The models therefore become territorialised in different ways into multiple assemblages: of defensive strategy and policy, of the royal court and distant royal courts, assemblages of models at multiple scales and the assemblages of the towns that they represent, being affective within and acted upon by these dispersed relations – being shown off, being maintained and stimulating action elsewhere.

Fifty years later the models were no longer on display, and had been moved to the attic of the Invalides (Buisseret 1998, 129). It was proposed that developments in cartography – the invention of contour lines – had made relief models obsolete. They were replaced by a more portable and less fragile and cumbersome form of representation. Within the framework of object itineraries this was not the death of the objects, but a period in which they were at rest. By being withdrawn from regular interaction the models were overtaken by their materials. No longer actively maintained, the models gathered dust, pieces broke and materials decayed – 12 models were destroyed in the move (Buisseret 1998, 129). Yet the models retained some relations, they formed a part of the engineering archives, being related to other objects and documents which circulated as a homogeneous whole, a black-boxed set of relations, placed to one side, allowed to circulate but to rest. In 1791 the archive passed into the hands of the Comité des Fortifications who, within the context of the revolution and the Napoleonic wars, recognised the value of the models, preserving the existing models and commissioning new ones (Buisseret 1998, 129–30).

When re-encountered the models were not in a 'zombified state', they were vibrant assemblages of materials, composed of a bricolage of partial connections with people and places. They represented places in their state 50–100 years before, but had decayed in their own ways, their development diverging from the places that they represented. By being taken out of circulation these objects acquired a life of their own, their form and meaning no longer directly linked to the place which they represented. Through their enrolment in the ongoing military campaigns these objects saw these relations restored. Other relations were not entirely lost. The models were 'made contemporary' through the presence of similar objects in other courts; in the existence of these models linear temporality was ruptured by the ongoing circulation of the influence of these models (see Lucas 2015). We can begin to see therefore how these objects did not accrue simple linear lives as representations of the 'world out there' but had a non-linear existence in which they were affective upon other actants as particular relations were brought to the surface or receded.

After the Battle of Waterloo some models were taken to Berlin by the Prussians, where they stayed until the Second World War when a number were destroyed. We can see the capture of these models as having a dual purpose, with them being both a source of intelligence but also having prestige value as spoils of war, both as objects in themselves but also as representations of former French territories. Through their transport and display the models became representational in new ways; whereas they had once existed to assist with the planning of defence, they developed new meanings, as an index of military victory and political power, remaining iconographic representations of towns, but with this representation gaining an alternative significance. The remaining models remained in the Invalides, entering another phase of rest, until 1927 when they were declared to be *monuments historiques* and were preserved and placed on display. By this point their military role had been overtaken both by cartographic technology and developments in military strategy, with the models instead surviving as historical documents, having utility for research and education.

If we reflect on Sara Perry's (2013) point that models are knowledge making devices we can consider how they did not make the same types of knowledge through their existence. At different points they revealed military vulnerability, informed military strategy, became enrolled in the development of historical knowledge and gained political capital in a variety of ways, the result of a process which can be termed "map consciousness" (Klein 2017); that is, the changing of perceptions and understanding of the land through the process of cartography. Miniaturisation therefore creates an opportunity for things to participate in practice, to make demands, participate in knowledge creation and generate relations which are not possible without playing with the scales at which we encounter things (see Langin-Hooper 2015 for a discussion of this idea in relation to figurines in Hellenistic Babylonia). These are very much objects in flux. Today, in the dim light of the Musée de Plans Reliefs they appear as relics from the past, as stable objects. But this is a misconception. The dim light of the museum is a means of managing the vibrancy of the materials of which the models themselves are constituted to prevent them from fading, whilst they are viewed by tourists and scholars from across the world, potentially finding new meanings, as they do here through their recognition as itinerant objects.

Through this consideration of models I have sought to make a number of points. Firstly, objects can be seen as working across scales, as 'assemblage convertors' – they are productive components of assemblages which disrupt space-time and conventional modes of representation. As such, we can focus less on what objects are and more on what they do, which is likely to manifest in multiple ways across a variety of scales (Back-Daniellson 2013, 327; Jones 2012, 47–8). We can see this if we consider the models as a form of 'mobile urbanism' and also in the way that a Europe wide assemblage of models emerged through the display of these models in the Louvre. Secondly, objects are not static, but emerge along trajectories, which have implications for their future relations. With each move the objects were not

're-born' but existed through the lingering persistence of some relations, be they with archival materials, other models or the places that they represent. Whilst we can write a biography of these objects, we need to be alive to the fact that they do not simply exist in linear time, but construct non-linear time-spaces through the relations which they constitute, with certain relations being presented through particular interactions with the models or the performance of particular practices, be these educational, military or courtly. Finally, the lives of these models are not only contingent on their interaction with humans. When at rest these objects were overtaken by the qualities of their materials, they continued to be vibrant, as materials decayed, causing a divergence between the model as representation and the place which was represented, in which different materials were acting in different ways, sometime being maintained, but also decaying, creating derelict buildings or ruined spaces for example. It is this vibrancy of materials and the ways in which the material can overtake the social which I focus on in the final part of this chapter.

A return to materials

Form, it has been proposed, is an arrangement of materials. Objects, whether complete or incomplete, are coagulations of vibrant matter and retain their vibrancy, being in a constant state of flux, albeit one which generally operates at a slow pace thanks to the persistent qualities of materials. We have seen how the trajectories of objects have implications for archaeological research and the ways in which things function across scales, enabled by the qualities of their component parts. It is natural, therefore, to shift focus back to the material, to think about the implications of their vibrancy for relations between things and the wider world.

By seeing form in this way, we can see it not as a socialisation of the material world, but as a process through which materials and people act together in the emergence of social relations. The concept of materiality had been introduced to bridge this perceived divide between the material and the social; however, it is a slippery concept with no clear definition (see Harris and Cipolla 2017, 89–90). For Christopher Tilley (2007, 17) it is concept required to understand why objects are significant, to relate their 'thingness' to a wider social and historical context. What is fundamentally problematic about this assertion is that it implies the existence of a social context without materials and things, rather than of a social context constituted of interactions with them. For Elizabeth DeMarrais *et al* (2004) the concept is more relational, being the "the engagement of mind with the material world"; however this too is problematic as it postulates an ontological divide between mind and matter, human and non-human, when, following Deleuze and Guattari human bodies are nothing more than coagulations of matter and energy, just like things. Ingold (2007b) argues that the concept is not required, proposing that it is 'perverse' to focus on the materiality of objects rather than the properties of materials themselves. Indeed, materiality might be equated to understanding the 'essence' of objects, a concept which Jane Bennett (2010) strongly critiques (see also DeLanda and Harman 2017, 53 for a consideration of essences).

Rather than power being imbued in materials or materials having some essential property, the vibrancy of materials is the result of relations, both of material as assemblage and materials in assemblages. Essentialism, DeLanda (2006, 28) argues, starts with finished products when we should instead focus on the historical processes which produce those objects; objects are not re-incarnated with every new relation but carry relations with them (Joyce 2015, 25). As Conneller (2011, 5) lucidly highlights, archaeological methodology creates a distinction between the subjective analysis of form and the objective, scientific, analysis of materials, which masks the reality that: “in different times and places, what people consider to be the fundamental nature of materials differ . . . and these substantially affect the ways that people deal with materials”. A more straightforward definition of materiality is that it is “the state or quality of being material” (Venkateson 2014, 72). What does this actually mean though? Our focus is on the properties created by relations at multiple scales, from the chemical bonds which provide materials with their qualities of malleability or hardness to the social relations from which new properties (or affordances) emerge, some accreting within form (the ability of a pot to pour) and others being more fleeting (the role of a pot as a symbol of identity); some being actualised and others remaining as virtual capacities. Based on the kinds of interactions and historical experiences of materials, both by individuals and wider groups, different properties of materials surface or emerge; what we may identify as the same material might be identified as radically different by different people based on the web of relations into which that material has entered, the effects it has caused, what it is likened to, what is noticed and what forms it might lend itself to (Conneller 2011, 36). As people and materials interact, different ‘performance characteristics’ of both humans and materials surface (Schiffer 1999, 17) and it is in this emergence that difference might be seen to appear. Indeed, “any role can be played by any interactor (material) having appropriate performance characteristics” (Schiffer 1999, 61) – a point well illustrated in Conneller’s (2011, 43–8) analysis of Palaeolithic beads which occur in multiple materials which, whilst being different from an ‘objective’ modern perspective, perform in similar ways and are capable of similar transformations. This is not to say that materiality is the enacting of ideas, but rather the process of coagulation or hardening, the becoming material of what would otherwise remain hypothetical or unthought (see also Jones 2012, 18).

Ingold (2007b, 3) argues that the introduction of the concept of materiality is symptomatic of a modernist, anthropocentric concern with objects as distinct from the human. We can see this in the post-processual archaeological literature, in which the idea has circulated widely, which is chiefly concerned with questions of semiotics (that is, understanding what objects mean), or how objects can tell us some message about the past, be this related to questions of gender, status or ethnicity, for example (see Hicks 2010 for a review). The dichotomy between human and non-human has simultaneously played out in discourse around the concept of agency, which debates whether or not the non-human can have agency and, by extension, might be perceived as having social consequences. Ingold (2013, 95–7) also finds this debate problematic. Indeed, as Dan Hicks (2010, 76) points

out, agency only entered archaeological discourse as a counterpoint to structure and might be considered redundant if we move beyond a dichotomy between the material and the cultural to understand how they constitute one another (see discussion of material agency in the context of ideas of animism in Chapter 2). It is, Ingold (2007b, 12) states, the very nature of materials that allows us to think in this way. Ideas of material agency might be viewed as a kind of contemporary animism, of bestowing some power onto the material world. However, materials are themselves vibrant; they are constantly in flux and always alive. As such, we might consider them to be *actually alive*, participating in social practice and the unfolding of the environment, part of and central to life, not part of some abstract ‘material world’ (see also Schiffer 1999, 12; although see Barrett 2016 and discussion thereof in Chapter 1 for a counterpoint). Indeed the abstract is the virtual immaterial world – an un-enacted world of potential becomings. Just because an object is not enrolled in some social action, it is not frozen in time – it does not become immaterial. Venkatesan (2014) gives the example of Hindu statues, which when consecrated embody the god that they depict following a ritual process of “methodological animism”, but once de-consecrated the very properties which surfaced in the selection of stone – hardness and durability – cause the form to endure, making the statue an unsettling presence. Materials and things are processes which are ongoing. Materials are transformed through interactions with their environment, in this case from stone to statue to god to statue, they slowly decay, they may grow mould or gather dust. Objects are not purely at the whim of their human masters, they are participants in their own destiny; they may not have intentionality but their chemical properties and their affordances (or emergent properties) are central to the trajectories which their lives may take; they can have more-than-social lives outside of realms of human interaction (Joyce and Gillespie 2015, 8; Gillespie 2015, 42).

This vibrancy is perhaps most apparent in the decaying ruins of old buildings. The word ruin can be both a noun and a verb (Stoler 2008, 194–5). The noun ruin might be related to place which is managed, often juxtaposing ruinous but stable structures with manicured lawns and a gift shop. As a verb it is a process of ruin. We might consider the ruin-as-noun to exhibit the characteristics of a strata – it is a striated or coded space, it is cared for and manged. Yet, ruins are vibrant “already and always actively recomposing (them)selves” (Smith 2015, 73). Ruins as things are caught between being stratified heritage sites and de-stratified ruins-as-processes, in which their vibrancy overtakes their form and function, they generate a social life – they are *productive* spaces (Dawdy 2010, 772, 776; Pétursdóttir and Olsen 2014); “ruination is a corrosive process that weighs on the future and shapes the present” (Stoler 2008, 194).

As an example we can discuss the Hilsea Lines, an 18th century linear defence intended to protect the port of Portsmouth from an overland attack. The site consists of an earthen bank behind a moat, punctuated by brick structures (bastions). The railway line into Portsmouth cuts through the Lines, with the monument incorporating a bridge. There are later concrete additions, gun

emplacements from 20th century conflicts. The monument is interesting for the way in which its vibrancy has been managed or has overtaken its social relations along its length. The site is under the ownership of Portsmouth City Council and is a Scheduled Monument, meaning that it is recognised as being of 'national significance', largely due to its relationships to other surviving defences around Portsmouth including a series of cliff-top forts and the naval dockyard (National Heritage List for England: 1001861).

The protection of the site has stratified the ruin, it should be ruin-as-noun. This is not to say that the monument should be stable, indeed standing on this stratum we can be deterritorialised into a web of documents, planning committees, local authority and government budgets. The monument, as a 'heritage asset', is more than its physical structure; just as it functioned relationally as a defence so it becomes relationally as a 'heritage asset'. It territorialises more than its materials, the monument incorporates this web, which is also a translation of it, depending upon one's perspective. This territorialisation has coded the monument, striated its space; it may become certain and things and not others. Process must be followed to make any change, permission granted; heritage conservation codes maintenance, demanding that buildings are worked on in particular ways (Edensor 2011, 246). The materials though, do not ask permission. They demand particular types of care: bricks decay, stonework erodes, the earthen bank becomes colonised by a diversity of plant life. The temporality of materials is problematic. They are persistent, outliving the network of associations from which this monument, as a coagulation of flows of materials, labour, political authority and military strategy, emerged, but are also unstable, becoming de-stratified, contradicting the desire to preserve the monument (Mol and Law 1995, 279–80; Edensor 2005, 829; 2011, 447; Olsen *et al* 2012, 143–5).

This de-stratification of the monument causes new affordances to emerge. It only afforded defence for as long as there was a threat. Affordances are relational, and in the way that materials are manipulated and managed we see the monument generate affordances that vary along its length; different capabilities come into play as the monument comes to perform in different ways (Schiffer 1999, 17). The eastern end of the monument, bastions 3 and 4, is characterised by well-kept brick structures (Figure 3.5). The structures are regularly re-pointed, plant growth removed, woodwork and ironwork painted, the earthen bank kept clear of weeds. A sign board provides some information about the history of the site. This place is ruin-as-noun, it is constantly worked on to manage the materials, to keep their vibrancy at bay. Surrounding the monument are houses; this is a residential area. It is inhabited. Space here is stratified, the monument is given purpose. Part of the structure is the ranger's office, another a recording studio. This space has been stratified as 'heritage' (Edensor 2005, 831; see also Chapter 5).

Further east the monument is very different (Figure 3.6). It is overgrown, graffiti covers the walls, doors hang from their hinges. It is surrounded by an industrial estate and is inaccessible. This part of the monument is wasteland; it resists functional categorisation, it is uninhabited, a wilderness situated at the 'edgeland' – that



FIGURE 3.5 The western end of the Hilsea Lines, Portsmouth, showing the site as a managed landscape. Image: Ben Jervis.



FIGURE 3.6 The eastern end of the Hilsea Lines, Portsmouth, showing a ruinous and feral landscape. Image: Ben Jervis.

ambiguous place between town and country which everybody goes through but where nobody lives (Shoard 2000). If inhabitation keeps “the mayhem of decay at bay” (Edensor 2005, 842), here in the edgeland the material has overtaken the social. Its care makes demands which cannot be met, so it takes it upon itself to become something else. The metal gates erected to keep out vandals have been thwarted by bolt cutters, small patches of fresh brickwork sit next to decaying ones; the monument resists attempts to block and constrain its potency. The monument has been surrendered to this vibrancy, its designation as a nature reserve is an attempt to stratify the site, yet it resists its stratification as heritage asset, it refuses to be ruin-as-noun, it is resolutely ruin-as-process. Through its de-stratification, its over-coding by the vibrant flows of matter, it affords new activities; anti-social activities – illegality and disorder – behaviours in direct contravention of how the structure was supposed to be experienced as a military site and, indeed, the values that it was intended to protect, but no less meaningful (Dawdy 2010, 770; Pétursdóttir 2013). It is here that the potency and vibrancy of materials is visible. Whilst we are guided (or transported) through the eastern end on a ‘military trail’, here we are wayfarers, scrambling through the undergrowth, engaging with the materiality of the monument on its terms. Here the monument occupies a smoother space, coded by the materials and their different temporalities, but this is an assemblage, a de-stratified coalescence of flows; it is only when there is an application to make some formal change that the stratification of the site as heritage asset is exposed, but so far any attempts to put these materials back into their place have been resisted by them. This assemblage, of the Hulsea Lines as ruin-as-verb, owes its agency, its ability to cause affect, not to the human but to the vitality of the materials which constitute it (Bennett 2010, 34). The monument encapsulates Shannon Dawdy’s (2010, 772) point that “some ruins are long lasting, either because [they are] maintained or because [they are] utterly neglected”.

The monument is cast in terms of a linear temporality; we can trace phases of development, the addition of new gun emplacements and its decay and management. But this linearity is at odds with the temporality of its materials (Olsen *et al* 2012, 143–5). Presences and absences reveal moments of transition, moments of stratification (carefully selected bricks mortared with lime) or de-stratification (poorly selected replacement stone), they transport us to other times and places: the 18th century brickworks or a meeting room at Portsmouth City Council where a decision was made. Aborted attempts at restoration reveal overly ambitious schemes to revitalise this monument, to turn it from wasted space to a stratified, functional space. Just as the networks from which the monument emerged have decayed, so the decay of materials opens up new links – to modern quarries or brickworks – or conceals old ones. A conservation need to use ‘appropriate’ materials brings past materials and processes back into contemporary action. Whilst we might focus on the surface properties of these materials, their texture or colour, they have mass and depth. We should not necessarily assume that material qualities were the only reasons particular materials were chosen; they were encountered, they came from particular places, they made demands on infrastructure. Different properties of the

same materials have emerged along the Lines, collapsing a dichotomy between the 'material' and 'cultural' properties of things, showing how chemically the same material might afford different things by virtue of its relations; it is the intersection between material properties and social concerns with heritage which affords permanence, and the slow materiality of decay and the relationship of the monument to rhythms of urban life which afford decay and open up the potential for the emergence of counter-narratives and alternative experiences of the monument elsewhere. Furthermore, we experience and respond to what are the 'same' materials in different ways; at the east of the monument the stable historical monument carries a perception of safety and ease, whilst in the west one feels on edge, the material encounter suggesting danger and unease. Furthermore, these materials afford differentiated experiences and elicit different responses depending upon the context of encounter; as heritage professional, dog walker, drug addict or nature conservationist – all are affected by these materials in different ways (Schiffer 1999, 75–8).

Even during the construction of the monument we can view this relationality. Whilst in this context we can assume a level of modern western rationality on the part of the builders, we should also appreciate that certain stone and clay suggested itself for inclusion in the monument by virtue of its location and its history of exploitation – its properties emerged from relations in the past and in anticipation of relations in the future, materials that afforded longevity and value were selected; properties which emerge at the intersection of material-human interactions (inspections of stone in quarries, the transformation of clay into brick) and are not inherent within the materials themselves. Materials are understood relationally, as similar or different to others and as they are encountered, selected and worked they generate new momentum, and new affordances emerge from them, creating new contexts for material engagement (Conneller 2011, 113–4). Furthermore, they are not bounded; as assemblages in themselves, materials can extend beyond their chemical composition, exerting force, shaping perception and creating possibilities (Bennett 2010, 24). At Hilsea, the coalition of materials makes different demands: the broken window affords access to trespassers (both human and animal) and may accelerate the decay of the bricks; the decayed bricks pose a risk to the stability of the structure as a whole. It is in these material relations that we can reveal the non-linear history of this monument, as a complex bundle of relations between materials, human practice and non-human agents (weather, animals, plants) – an ongoing process of interaction, of over-coding – a battle between the vibrancy of the material and a desire to code and stratify space as social and humanised.

What we are left with is a deeper history, one to which archaeology can contribute. Documents, maps and technical drawings reveal the linear history of the Lines, but the study of the material reveals the messier reality, allowing us to think about the multiple, inter-related pasts in the present, a history which is not linear, but anticipatory (DeSilvey 2012; Witmore 2013, 138), a history of living and working with materials and their affects, seeking to manage their vibrancy, or surrendering to it, where we play with the temporalities of materials and the relations between them to reveal and map flows and intersections. We come to ask not what

the Lines are (military defences) or why they matter (their historical significance), but to consider *how* they matter (Hinchcliffe *et al* 2005); understanding that just as material and form cannot be distinguished neither can material and meaning. The material monument of the Lines matters as a component of an agentic assemblage which includes the effects of administrative action, the manipulation and care of materials, modern ideas of heritage and nature conservation; the Lines are more than their material presence (Bennett 2010, 51). What the Lines demonstrate is that humans and materiality are not separate; but that they are implicated in each other (Edensor 2011, 448).

Summary

Things are not as they seem. By thinking through the implications of assemblages for things, this chapter has challenged the ways in which archaeologists work with the material, highlighted the vibrancy of matter and sought to draw together ideas of object itinerary and assemblage. The thread which runs through all of the examples cited here is the instability of the material, be that in the way that categories emerge through archaeological work or inventorying or the vibrancy of the materials themselves. The notion of itinerant objects provides a further tool for exploring processes of deterritorialisation and challenging the ontological status of things, creating scope for thinking about multiple things existing in the textual realm (with implications for both the texts and the objects) and across scales, as we see in the consideration of military models. It is scale that is a principal theme of the next section, where we move from things themselves to the confederations of things, ideas, texts, spaces and people which we perceive of as ‘urban’.

Notes

- 1 A voluntary scheme in England and Wales for members of the public to report finds, typically recovered through metal detecting.
- 2 It is not my intention here to focus on the production of these models, but it should be highlighted that model making is a skilled activity, with implications for the producers and the ways in which they engage with the world (see Perry 2013; Back-Daniellson 2013, 335).

4

ASSEMBLAGE URBANISM

In this chapter we move from considering the material to thinking about the implications of assemblage thought for exploring issues of space and place, through the application of the tools of assemblage thought to a series of case studies. A focus on urbanism has emerged here for two reasons. Firstly, assemblage thought has been particularly fruitfully applied in contemporary urban geography to highlight the emergence of alternative urban worlds and the effects of urban processes, creating opportunities to challenge the hegemony of top-down, anthropocentric, power structures to explore how power emerges in the city (e.g. McFarlane 2011a; 2011c; Frichot *et al* 2016). Secondly, urbanism has featured strongly in the writing of Manuel DeLanda (1997; 2006; 2016), who has explored the emergence of towns and their affective capacities as a means of discussing economic and social development over the long term (although less so in the work of Deleuze and Guattari). His work highlights the importance of the material, the interweaving of processes and the historical contingency of urban emergence. This has implications for urban archaeologists, both in terms of how they discuss their evidence and the questions which they ask of it. This chapter considers these issues through four sections. The first explores the concept of urbanity itself, drawing upon recent discussions in urban geography (particularly the work of Colin McFarlane), urban history and archaeology. The second considers the apparently concrete nature of the urban landscape, developing from the consideration of vibrant materials in the previous chapter. The third considers the way in which places which we might identify as urban emerged in the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age in Mesopotamia, the region generally recognised as having the earliest ‘cities’ and one which has been particularly rich in recent scholarship. The final section considers the deterritorialised nature of urban centres through a discussion of early medieval towns and their hinterlands.

Urbanism is a problematic concept within archaeology and other disciplines. ‘Urban’ can mean many things, from a large settlement to a particular form of

economic or social entity. We can question the extent to which urban studies in archaeology have actually been concerned with explaining urbanism. Excavation reports do an excellent job of describing urban remains, but more interpretive work could be criticised for seeing the urban as one articulation of a broader 'society'. Vere Gordon Childe's (1950) approach to defining cities using a checklist of criteria can, for example, be seen as a set of characteristics for defining the state, not the city (Ur 2016), whilst studies of trade typically see towns and cities as illustrative of wider contacts; as nodes in economic networks. Our approaches have been limited by seeing towns as economic or social phenomena. If we accept that 'social', 'economic' and even 'urban' are reified generalities then we problematise these concepts; urbanism cannot have a 'social' explanation, but rather becomes one set of practices through which the emergence of particular forms of society can be explained (Fariás 2011, 367); our challenge is to explain these moments of agency, not just to describe them (Angelo 2011, 575). Indeed, by focussing down on the connections which constitute these places, the practices that make them, the role of urban places in constituting societies and networks becomes clearer (Van Oyen 2015b).

Assembling the city

This is the place—these narrow ways, diverging to the right and left, and reeking everywhere with, dirt and filth. Such lives as are led here bear the same fruits here as elsewhere. The coarse and bloated faces at the doors have counterparts at home and all the wide world over. Debauchery has made the very houses prematurely old. See how the rotten beams are tumbling down, and how the patched and broken windows seem to scowl dimly, like eyes that have been hurt in drunken frays.

(Dickens 1842)

The artifacts found in the backyard cesspool were not at all what the archaeologists had expected to find in one of the poorest sections of the city. They found dishes in a variety of brightly colored painted and molded white patterns, a few gilded porcelains, elegant stemmed glasses, and a cruet of imported Irish glasses . . . decorative figurines and flowerpots . . . The artifacts included a teacup printed with the image of Father Theobold Mathew, the founder of Ireland's temperance movement

(Cantwell and diZerega Wall 2001, 219)

Archaeological approaches to urbanism have centred on defining the essence of urban places (see discussions in Cowgill 2004; M.L. Smith 2014; Christopherson 2015; Carballo and Fortenberry 2015; Jarvis 2016a; Gaydarska 2016), that is those properties which define it as a reified generality (DeLanda 2006, 28). The failure of archaeologists (or indeed historians and geographers) to settle on a single definition of 'urban' should highlight to us that seeking such a definition is an over-simplistic

way of defining place. The two descriptions above are of the Five Points area of New York, a notorious 19th century slum, and illustrate this point. Here, a long literary history created an idea of a crime infested neighbourhood of depravity, into which the archaeological finds did not neatly fit. Rather than challenging the received wisdom, the popular press concluded that high quality artefacts must have been stolen, rather than exploring how this evidence contrasts the conventional perspectives (Reckner 2002, 103).

The reality is that interactions with the excavated remains revealed, or rather created (see Law 2004, discussed further in Chapter 5), an alternative urban world, not separate from, but co-existing with the world experienced by authors such as Charles Dickens in his *American Notes* and Herbert Asbury in his *Gangs of New York*. Depending upon the evidence used we see different urban worlds forming, one based on material possessions, the other based on qualitative accounts and economic metrics. Neither of these worlds is false, both co-exist, but they reveal different facets of urban life. Engaging with archaeological evidence is, therefore, only one way of learning the city. It is a form of “data urbanism” (McFarlane 2011a, 82); that is, a way of learning an urban place not through dwelling within it but through analysing the data which urban life has generated. Data urbanism leads to us learning cities in different ways, creating alternative urban realities. Therefore, urbanism is not easily defined because our understanding of it emerges from our experiences and perceptions of living with the world, of understanding the enaction of similarity and difference from particular perspectives. What this example shows us is that by taking different points of entry into cities, a process of ‘assemblage urbanism’ can reveal to us different processes of becoming urban. We can, therefore, use it as a powerful tool to move from grappling with urban essence (being urban) to understanding urban processes (becoming urban).

In a discussion of language, DeLanda (1997, 218) argues that “human beings do not learn their mother tongue as a set of rules . . . children . . . learn language by being exposed to adult conversation”. As a result of this process of learning by immersion language appears as a meshwork of dialects, whereby “each dialect retains its individuality and is articulated with the rest by overlapping with its immediate neighbours” (DeLanda 1997, 186). The point to take from this is that across the meshwork various forms of difference emerge, which can be seen as the result of learning, in our case learning urbanism. Our ideas of urbanism are built from our exposure to representations of the city, and by drawing on analogy with other similar processes which take place elsewhere in time and space, with each scholar’s understanding circulating in their own research, creating a means of thinking about places which is less of a stratified hierarchy and more of a free-flowing meshwork (McFarlane 2011a, 116). Ideas of the city therefore circulate and aggregate, creating lingering perceptions which emphasise certain manifestations of urban life and mask others. This process occurs at multiple scales, from thinking about urban places as phenomena to exploring a single settlement as a specific articulation of urban life through the performance of particular events. The process of research causes ideas of urbanism and pre-conceptions of places to

circulate, continually re-surfacing in archaeological discourse and serving to stratify these complex processes, flattening them and foregrounding urban essence over urban becoming. 'Urbanism' becomes a circulating reference, or black-box which, much like the artefact types discussed in the previous chapter, is active in the development of research trajectories and the building of knowledge (Fowler 2013, 64); a category existing prior to the past action that we are seeking to understand. The persistence of ideas that continually re-surface both helps and hinders us. It creates ideas of urbanity which are grounded in some form of scholarship, but are reflective of particular forms of urban learning, undertaken at different times and in different places. It is for this reason that we have such intense debate over how we define the urban in archaeology, as these different arenas of urban learning are brought together in conflict with one another.

An assemblage approach to urbanism moves us away from focussing on the essence of urban places concerned principally with definition, towards us understanding towns and cities as unravelling multi-scalar, socio-spatial processes, which have depth (or are contingent on past performances), but also have potential to develop in different ways (McFarlane 2011b, 654). Crucially, as assemblages their development is open ended, giving rise to new mechanisms for urban living and developing in a variety of different directions (DeLanda 1997, 31). We might see the city itself not as a static landscape but as the materialisation of a set of overlapping processes; performances of ritual, political and economic life, for example (M.L. Smith 2014; Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2012; Wynne-Jones and Fleisher 2016), creating a heterogeneous urban taskscape (see Ingold 1993). Within a single, physical landscape multiple urbanisms can exist, as different sets of relations become entangled within these concrete spaces (McFarlane 2011b, 652), as we see in the contrasting urbanisms revealed at Five Points (and this re-iterates the point made in previous chapters that there is a single reality which is multiple in and of itself). Furthermore, whereas past approaches require a concept of urbanism to exist prior to action, as a stage on which urban life might take place, an assemblage approach focusses on the immanence of urban places; to quote McFarlane (2011b, 603) "urbanism does not exist, but occurs". The city, therefore, becomes "an object which is relentlessly being assembled at sites of urban practice" (Fariás 2009, 2), and, whilst the "city has a familiar form, it is also a ruse" (Simone 2011, 344), that is it is something which appears stable and definable but is, in fact, slippery, vibrant and insecure.

If we think about urbanism as process, what kind of process, or processes, is it? In his analysis of cities in medieval Europe, undertaken at a macro-scale, DeLanda (1997) identifies two kinds of urban settlements. Ports, he argues, are gateways. These exhibit the characteristics of a meshwork or assemblage, being comparatively smooth social spaces in which heterogeneous flows combine with each other. In contrast, larger cities or central places are more hierarchical and stratified, more differentiated along the lines of class with political and economic institutions. As will be discussed later in this chapter, there is a certain amount of validity to this analysis, however it is also fruitful to focus on individual places, to explore

processes of stratification and de-stratification, striation and smoothing, within a single urban entity. In doing so, we can reveal dynamics of power and processes of development, as well as understanding how these processes are historically contingent and open up multiple possibilities for becoming urban.

These processes are particularly visible when we think about informal urban settlements, which feature strongly in McFarlane's (2011a; 2011b) work on assemblage urbanism in modern South America and India. Informal settlements highlight the ways in which urban design is open ended and emergent, developing out of particular pasts, surfacing elements of urban life in unpredictable ways. As such, they provide a window into the ways in which multiple urban worlds emerge, including those which are at odds with an idealised view of the city which might exist in the minds of planners or politicians. An example is provided by Carolyn Nakamura's (2014) study of the tension caused by the encroachment of informal settlement on to heritage sites in Mumbai. She argues that "landscapes of such encroachment haunt and undermine official heritage narratives that valorize the monumental, the settled, and the elite" (2014, 290). The enacting of internationally influenced heritage policies serves to wipe away the heritage of the 'settler city', preserving an idealised elite heritage and disassociating it from other elements of the urban assemblage, the marginalised settlers at the periphery. We see, in this example, how processes of dwelling in the city lead to different lived urban worlds emerging, in tension with each other. These are deterritorialised both into each other and wider networks, with agency emerging at this intersection of scales: the everyday processes of dwelling which create a counter-heritage and challenge prevailing narratives and the 'formal city'; the performance of internal politics and government and external ideas of heritage, demonstrating clearly the messiness of the city as an urban assemblage; an ongoing process of stratification and de-stratification, all of which are processes of the actualisation of virtual capacities through the intensive process of urban dwelling; actualising real but otherwise virtual pasts as they are lived out. The focus on ideas of heritage in Nakamura's (2014) study shows that cities are more-than-spatial entities, they are part of wider networks which they both effect and are affected by (Brantz 2017; Lewis 2017; de Munck 2017); cities are messy, they do not resolve into an integrated whole but are more than the sum of their parts, and, because they are deterritorialising it can be difficult to draw the line as to where the city stops (Tonkiss 2011, 584–5). Through deterritorialisation urban life produces what Axel Christopherson (2015, 129) (drawing upon Amin and Thrift 2007) terms "leaking zones of contact", where different realms of urban practice come into contact with each other, causing unpredictable effects and creating specific social dynamics. By focussing on processes therefore it becomes apparent that, like everything else, towns and cities exist as assemblages within assemblages; as DeLanda (2016, 14) (following Braudel) states, the world can be perceived of as sets of sets, "forms of historical agency are related to one another as parts of wholes" – buildings form neighbourhoods, cities form with regions, all of which might be defined by the relations through which they emerge or surface (DeLanda 2005, 99; 105).

Assemblage approaches therefore provide a means to ‘blow up’ old dividing lines which have defined scholarship, and to shift focus from the analysis of the city as a whole to being something formed of multiplicities, through which power flows in a variety of ways and various forms of agency emerge (McFarlane 2011c). We move towards a concept of the urban which is, in a sense, less problematic, as it does not exist prior to action but emerges through navigating the archaeological evidence in particular ways, just as in the past urbanity was learnt through navigating social relations, being something which unfolded as a process of becoming. It is the tension between the urban form as a persistent presence and the fluid and vibrant relations which allow this form to persist that can be brought into focus through thinking about urban planning.

Grappling with stasis: Assembling urban topography

In the mid 19th century the Back Bay area of Boston, Massachusetts, was re-developed, becoming an elite enclave within the city (Figure 4.1). This elite consisted of members of the city’s ‘old’ mercantile class and new industrialists, who had become



FIGURE 4.1 1838 map of Boston engraved for S.N. Dickinson's Boston Almanac. The future site of Back Bay is situated to the west of the public garden. Image: Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library.

wealthy through investment in textile manufacture. The development of Back Bay was an attempt to carve out an enclave from what was an expanding and increasingly chaotic city (Domosh 1992). This insertion can be seen as creating a new iteration of an urban landscape, emerging from the existing city and influencing the trajectories of urban becoming which might emerge in the future. The process did not cease with the materialisation of this plan, rather the urban landscape itself was an ongoing performance. For example, regulations were enrolled in the performance of urban life, preventing commercial encroachment (Domosh 1992, 299).

The presence of this enclave coded the flows which constitute urban life. As we know, for Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 16), desire is a circulating force which drives social interactions; it is a desire to be social which drives society. They argue that social structures exist to code desire, to make certain interactions possible whilst limiting the potential of others, to restrict the forms which can emerge from the actualisation of the virtual capacities of the Body without Organs. Urban landscapes are more than materialisations of these structures, they serve to code, to limit the forms of urban life which can emerge, but are also enrolled in the emergence and performance of productive interactions which drive the ongoing emergence of the city; the city itself might be understood as a Body without Organs, “as made up of practices that oscillate between stratification and destratification” (Horvath and Maicher 2016, 34), in which the city is not a body in which everything has its place but a messier set of intensities, where however ordered a space seems to be, power to disrupt emerges from the cracks between these striations (see also Farías and Höhne 2016, 25). Urban space is stratified as the physical landscape and the people inhabiting it are sorted and then cemented by the enacting of regulatory frameworks. This is an example of a city as hierarchy in DeLanda’s (1997) terms, or an urban stratum. The rigid social distinction, the use of architectural palettes and the manicuring of landscapes is a strong contrast to the informal settlements of Mumbai discussed above. There, materials find new uses, buildings are made from what is at hand and people resist attempts to impose order from above (McFarlane 2011b). These settlements are smoother spaces, assemblages or meshworks, in which activity is less regulated and structures less permanent. Just as informal settlements are mineralisations (DeLanda 1997, 30) of flows of wealth, materials and people, so Back Bay is a mineralisation of Boston ‘society’, emerging from a combination of the manipulation of urban space by powerful residents, but also the actions of many individuals: builders, architects and the dock and factory workers whose labour funded the lifestyles of its inhabitants, producing people as powerful or as disenfranchised, along with this space. The slow materiality of the physical landscape combined with the work of urban bureaucracy to allow this materialisation of social distinction to persist, by introducing a control mechanism to code desire and maintain a status quo.

This suggests that in the 19th century Boston was planned and built, that it had a defined end which was materialised. However, it has already been shown that for this plan to persist in its conceived form work was required. Plans are not fixed, but are processes in themselves, which give rise to alternative and varied urban worlds,

but also which persist, causing past decisions and actions to resonate in the future. The city as a whole was overtaken by various processes. Industrialisation, from which the residents of Back Bay profited, caused population rise and increased immigration. Existing power structures, originally built on mercantile commerce, became over-coded by industrialisation, allowing new industrialists to acquire wealth and deterritorialised Boston into an international economic network, creating an urban world that “was no longer of their [the elites] making” (Domosh 1992, 303).

This case study highlights a number of pertinent points. The first is that urban landscapes are emergent; it was the performance of particular ‘urban’ activities within Boston which generated the agency, or causality, for the development of Back Bay; this development was historically contingent, emerging from the territorialisation of Boston residents and resources into economic performances. The second is that urban landscapes are performances, which deterritorialise them into wider networks, be it networks of regulation or international commerce. The third is that these performances are generative, leading to new forms of urbanism emerging. Although it is a material manifestation of urban life, the urban landscape is not static, nor is it inert; space is enrolled in the performances of dwelling, both as a lingering of historical processes which shape future action and as one of a number of participants in generative performances which lead to the emergence of new urban worlds (Brantz 2017; De Munck 2017; Lewis 2017).

It is this vibrancy apparent in urban landscapes that traditional approaches to urban planning in the past have failed to capture. Urban history and archaeology have long grappled with questions of urban planning and, in particular, a binary distinction between ‘planned’ and ‘unplanned’ (or ‘organic’) towns and cities. The reality, of course, is that the picture is rarely this simple. Michael E. Smith (2007, 4–7) calls for a collapsing of this dichotomy, instead arguing for a consideration of spatial principles which structure urban plans, either consciously or sub-consciously, and the recognition that, in reality, settlements might be placed on a continuous spectrum, with some being more planned than others. The application of techniques such as plan analysis, in which urban development is studied through the analysis of the relationship between plan units has revealed this complexity, with episodes of planned and unplanned growth characterising urban settlements, as well demonstrated by Keith Lilley (2000) for medieval Britain, for example. Here methods have begun to address the historically contingent unfolding of urban space, rather than perceiving of the plan as a pre-conceived and inevitable whole.

The concept of vibrant urban landscapes is well illustrated through Shannon L. Dawdy’s (2016) study of the warehouse quarter of New Orleans. Dawdy (2016, 33) stresses the importance of materials in the urban experience, arguing that “humans make cities, but not exactly as they please”. Whilst excavating in the warehouse district of the city, evidence of large scale demolition of working class housing in the 1880s to make way for the Magnnis Cotton Mill was revealed. Amongst these houses was an 18th century plantation house, a lingering presence from an earlier time. The persistence of the house through subsequent phases of urban development, first as a middle class suburb and then a working class area, largely inhabited

by Irish and German immigrants, during which the house found use as a school and a brewery, shows how urban landscapes are messy enterprises. It was flows of goods, political power and money which were entangled in the performances of urban power through which New Orleans developed, the city being deterritorialised into widespread networks of commerce, but the lingering presence of this house disrupted the emergence of urban form, being an anomaly in an otherwise planned street grid. Over the course of half a century the landscape was transformed, as the performance of deterritorialised city life generated the potential for new forms of urbanism, de-stratifying urban space as first the suburban life of the wealthy elite and then the slums of the working class emerged. Like the Hilsea Lines discussed in Chapter 3, the house outlived the networks of which it was originally a part, but was a stubborn presence in the coding of the flows of urban life into a landscape through which power could be managed.

A focus on planning masks the fluidity and dynamism of urban spaces. It can be linked with symbolic approaches, in which urban plans are seen as in some way meaningful pieces of material culture. This notion of the city plan as the materialisation of a cosmology has a long history within urban studies, but is increasingly being challenged. Peter Carl (2000), for example, argues that the notion of the symbolic city is a Renaissance invention and that the symbolism of cities emerged through the praxis of urban living, rather than being pre-conceived. Similarly, Barry Kemp (2000) argues that the human ability to think metaphorically creates the potential for meanings to be read into the urban landscape. Such approaches have two implications, which an assemblage approach might help to address. The first is that meanings in the urban landscape are not pre-formed or static, but are emergent; whilst plans may be historically contingent (for example relating to earlier settlement or circulating ideas of urban plans), they also have potential to play a role in the formation of varied and alternative urban worlds. The second, is that plans are not, therefore, stages for action, but active players in the unfolding of these urban worlds (Gregson and Rose 2001). Rather than seeing topography as inherently meaningful we must reconstruct the processes through which it came to matter and identify the work that was put in to re-iterating this significance, be that in the form of regulation, ritual processions or an unofficial zoning of space. Rather than seeing monumentality, for example, as a characteristic of urban planning, we can question what these monuments do and their implications for urban populations (Osborne 2014, 210).

In the discussion of military models in Chapter 3, we were introduced to McFarlane's (2011a, 116) term "mobile urbanism", which describes the process through which ideas of urbanity circulate between places. This can be seen in urban planning, but need not be considered as the passive reproduction of planning principles but, rather, a historically contingent and generative process. For example, Samuel Smith (2015) discusses the planning of towns by Mormon and non-Mormon communities in the U.S. mountain west in the 19th and early 20th centuries. He argues that in planning their towns Mormon communities drew on a range of ideas, including the principles which underpinned the plans of parts

of Salt Lake City, the first Mormon city, but influenced by other contemporary towns. Whilst united by common features, and distinctive from non-Mormon towns, the circulating ideas were not reproduced as a symbolic grammar, but as the re-articulation of ideas about the role of urban spaces in a dialogue with the constraints and affordances of the natural environment (we might be reminded here both of Deleuze's writing and of Jones' (2017) point about repetition rather than replication discussed in Chapter 2). It was the process of inhabiting urban spaces and the social structures that afforded particular ways of living that were reproduced; the mobility of urban ideas, as well as serving to introduce a coding of behaviour through urban space.

Town plans, whilst appearing to territorialise space, are deterritorialised in that they are connected to processes of urban dwelling, as well as other processes which manipulate the flows of people, resources and ideas coming into the towns, emerging as a spatial process of becoming urban, rather than representing a fixed mode of being (DeLanda 1997, 30–1). Similar points can be raised from Martin Hall's (2006) study of Cape Town in which he argues that "early Cape Town . . . was a system of spaces that coded power in a landscape". Here the imposed street grid of the Dutch colonial settlement created a distinction between civilised and uncivilised and served to articulate power, limiting the potential for alternative and unforeseen forms of urban living to emerge. Again we can observe a process of stratification, a striation of urban space in which flows of desire were coded in the physical landscape to bring persistence (strata being highly coded and, therefore, striated, spaces).

It is too simplistic, however, to view urban landscapes as stratified hierarchies or unstratified meshworks. Even within striated spaces there is room for unpredictable entanglements to occur and new urbanisms to emerge, the city is always a mixture. Monica L. Smith (2014) highlights that there are multiple forms of urban landscape, or perhaps more specifically taskscape (see Ingold 1993), which co-exist within a place. These may relate to the performance of political, economic, ritual and social elements of life. The physical landscape structures, or codes, the entanglements of action which form these connected performances, creating potential for some action and limiting others. The spatial syntax of urban space codes the flows which circulate the city and constitute urban life, creating fertile spaces for social relations and forming and crystallising distinctions between public and private, for instance (Carballo and Fortenberry 2015, 14). Open spaces, for example, create opportunities for social interaction, either the emergence of community relationships or conflicts (Smith 2008; Peuramaki-Brown 2013, 579). The spaces within urban plans therefore create potential for multiple urbanisms to emerge. Look, for example, at the way that open spaces in modern cities may emerge as spaces for communal gathering, such as when the streets of London are animated by the pageantry of a royal procession, or for the contestation of power, as seen, for example in Tahrir Square in Cairo during the Arab Spring of 2011. The urban landscape is not static. Plans create the illusion of stasis, but they are, in fact vibrant processes.

As Deleuze (1998, 159) states, “the image is not an object but a ‘process’”. Urban planning is the actualisation of a particular virtual form of urbanism, but one which can easily be broken down and over-coded by the processes of dwelling in that space. The city space is not a tracing of blueprints and planning documents, but a stratification of the processes which produce them, which becomes de-stratified as urban life deterritorialises and de-codes those processes (McGaw 2016, 193). No matter how similar cities seem, each is a contextually specific articulation of local and global processes, producing specific forms of micro-politics (Frichot and Metzger 2016). Similarly, the study of urban plans and the application of GIS to the study of historical townscapes is not a process of tracing urban landscape, but of unfolding it, of mapping – of creating urban pasts. The maps produced are processes of diagramming, of actualising what might have been there and of reflecting on these imagined spaces and the pasts which unfolded within them (see Lilley and Dean 2015). Whilst appearing intentional and planned to varying degrees, urban landscapes have a power of their own to create “unintentional landscapes” (Gandy 2016), be this through their enrolment in political protest, or the way that the performance of urban life generates new forms of urban environment – such as the informal settlements discussed above or urban sprawl (M. E. Smith 2010) – or the way that the vibrant nature of the materials which form the urban landscape itself leads to natural processes of decay and colonisation, introducing a tension which is captured by the pejorative term ‘wasteland’, as spaces which are in direct contradiction to a planned urban space as discussed in relation to the Hilsea Lines in Chapter 3 (Gandy 2016, 435). Interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 559) define the city as “the striated space par excellence”, they see the city “primarily as a force of striation or capture” (Purcell 2016, 103), with smoother spaces such as the “temporary, shifting shantytowns of nomads” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 560) being a reaction against the striating city; the city becomes something to be overcome. However, by utilising their tools we find that the city is capable of overcoming itself; whilst the city does over-code space, it is also susceptible to external forces (Wallenstein 2016, 112). Indeed, the challenge for the city might be the need to sustain itself, to “produce its own limit . . . to avoid being completely fragmented and dispersed along the lines of flight that it also produces” (Wallenstein 2016, 118). The ordering of space and the associated assemblages of bureaucracy which code urban space and behaviour can be seen as one way that this limit can be produced; urban space is one component of the productive urban machine, a representation of the urban to which the city is not reducible but which allows the city to stabilise as ordered space is reterritorialised into the ongoing production of the urban.

Key to an assemblage approach to urbanism is the stressing that urban form emerges from and with urban society, rather than existing prior to it. It could prove, therefore, to be a particularly powerful tool for shedding light on alternative forms of urban development. Urban sprawl and the development of ‘squatter settlements’ are typically seen as jarring with the urban order (M.E. Smith 2010). As we have already seen, however, these informal settlements, emerging from

processes of living with the city, are important components of urban life, and areas which can be particularly fruitful for revealing alternative urban narratives and sources of power within the urban landscape; “slums or informal settlements mark the daily enactment of practices that materially and bodily assert the right to the city . . . these practices give meaning to the urban landscapes as an agency of social change and political practice” (Weiss 2014, 21). The city as unplanned settlement does exist; it circulates in the minds of planners and politicians, in awarenesses and documents, as a virtual capacity of urban space. We might see planning as an anti-actualisation, as an act of ‘anti-production’, intended to suppress its potential and even deny its existence. But I would argue that just because we cannot see it, it does not mean that informal urban spaces are less real – they are simply hidden behind a shield of bureaucracy, rhetoric and policy which define what the urban should be. In Mumbai the tension between civic authorities, seeking to enact internationally defined heritage values, and the communities who have inhabited sites of archaeological and historical significance reveal alternative sources of power (Nakamura 2014). These are tensions which emerge from the history of Mumbai. The city emerged from several centuries of colonial imposition. Mumbai is a truly global city, formed as a coalescence of widely deterritorialised flows, stratified and coded by colonialists who sought to control flows of labour and resources (see DeLanda 1997, 86–8). The performance of this city was generative, drawing people to this economic hub, creating an urban place which exceeds the limits and imagination of those who first conceived the city, with settlers engaging with the landscape in different ways, decoding the stratification imposed from above, creating new forms of heritage which may be in tension with the ideas of heritage held by the city authorities. Such tensions cannot be revealed purely through the study of a static plan of habitation zones, and this alternative, productive and vibrant urbanism, of people living with the city, is not captured in official documents or surveys (McFarlane 2011a). This is an unintentional urban landscape, one which emerges through the performance of the city. No matter how planned an urban centre, a focus on emergence shows how urban assemblages are generative machines (see Wallenstein 2016, 114), creating places on the terms not only of those who hold official power, but of all the people, things and materials which constitute that urban space.

The urban landscape is somewhat paradoxical; on the one hand it is fluid and ever changing, on the other the slow temporality of materials causes the past to linger on in ways which can be disruptive – the care taken to sustain the material through everyday practices of highway maintenance, the painting of houses and the treatment of stonework being one way of mitigating the impact of this disruptive capacity. Following Rodney Harrison (2015) the urban landscape can be seen as a “surface assemblage”, that is an unfolding bundle of relations, which is both contingent upon the past but can also be disrupted by the irruption of the past into the present. This paradox becomes apparent in Krysta Ryzewski’s (2015) work on community displacement in early 20th century Detroit. The erection of the Michigan Central Railway Station and the neighbouring Roosevelt Park took

place as part of the ‘city beautiful’ movement of the 20th century. This movement developed in response to the unintentional landscapes which the performance of urban life created, being an attempt by civic leaders to assert control over urban spaces. The development required the clearance of an area of dense working class housing known as Corktown. Archaeological and documentary evidence shows that this process was not smooth. The civic authorities met resistance, but also the disposal of property and the building work itself created opportunities for speculators and entrepreneurs, who resisted the clearance of the landscape. We can see here a complex urban surface, a mixture of ongoing processes and irruptions from the past entangling in an unfolding of action, in which the material durability of Corktown disrupted the intention of civic authorities; the imposed ‘over-coding’ of this urban space could not be delivered because of the stubborn assemblage of Corktown households, which was able to process and code flows of money and generate power in resistance to that of the civic authorities. It was only by using a British army tank (which happened to be in the U.S. as part of a recruiting tour) that the clearance could be finalised. Corktown can be seen as a space striated not by the performance of the civic elite but by the processes of dwelling by those living there. Power flowed out of these performances of everyday life: the agency for clearance was not in the hands of the authorities but had to emerge from dialogue between these two assemblages of power. For the community of Corktown power came from their continued interaction with a materially durable urban landscape and the precarious nature of the political power of the civic elite. Ryzewski’s work has revealed an alternative history, in which people were not simply displaced, but resisted imposition. An assemblage approach can add to this narrative by problematising the source of this power, which is derived from the community’s ongoing relationships with the persistent material surroundings; the continued irruption of the disruptive past into what was intended to be emergence of an entirely new form of urbanism. The non-linear temporality of materials disrupted the onward march of ‘progress’. This example shows, therefore, how assemblages are always historically contingent, and the important role of the lingering past in the trajectories of development that an urban assemblage might take, and it reveals alternative sources of power within urban communities, which can be defined as assemblages of people, things and materials (Harris 2014).

The identification of the extent to which an urban landscape is planned is, of course, a useful exercise, but can be considered a means to understanding the role of the physical environment, both ‘natural’ and ‘man made’ in the emergence of urban pasts and futures. “Urban settlements constitute environments where flows of people, places and things collide” (Peuramaki-Brown 2013, 577), cities emerge from the entanglement of varied historical trajectories and are generative landscapes “comprised of compacted ruins and overflowing debris that structure present day experiences in an ongoing dialectical process” (Dawdy 2016, 32–3), they are what Hall (2006, 204) calls a “palimpsest of meanings” which emerge from different places and have varying implications. Urban history is therefore more than a linear history of events, it is a messy, non-linear, material history.

Assemblage thought offers a methodology and framework through which the dynamic nature of urban landscapes, as well as its emergent potential, can be captured. In what follows, two case studies are offered to explore these implications through specific archaeological examples. The first is concerned with the emergence of urban places and a concept of urbanism in Mesopotamia, the second with the processes of urban performance in the medieval world.

Trajectories to urbanism: Urban development in Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia has long been recognised as the home of the first cities, but recent research is demonstrating that pathways to urbanism are more complex than once thought. Exploring these urban trajectories through the lens of assemblage thought has the potential to elucidate these varied urbanisms. The focus here is on northern Mesopotamia, modern day Syria (Figure 4.2).

Chronological background

It is well established that this region saw two phases of urbanisation. The first, in the fourth millennium BCE, was initially linked to the expansion of the Uruk culture, named after a city in modern day Iraq, on the basis of material culture. However, excavations have demonstrated that at sites such as Tell Brak urbanism was an indigenous development and could, potentially, pre-date urban developments to the south and east (Oates *et al* 2006). This work has destabilised the

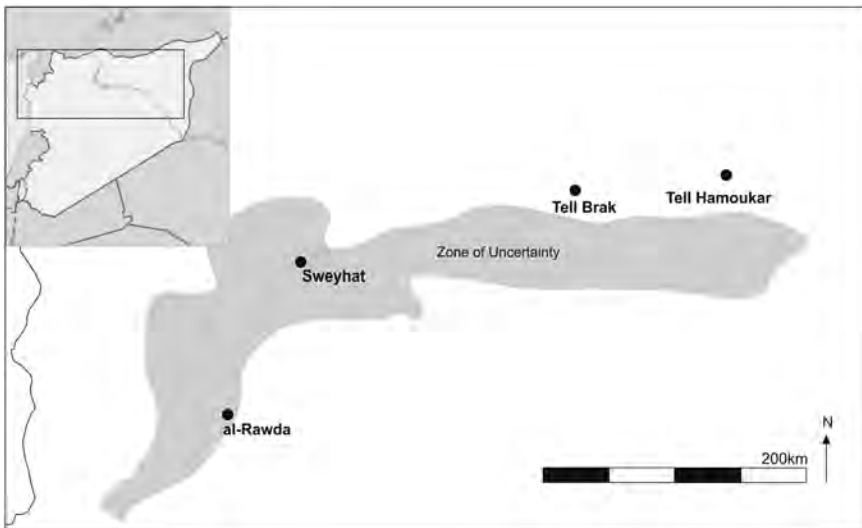


FIGURE 4.2 Map of Mesopotamia showing the location of sites mentioned in the text.
Image: Ben Jervis.

established narrative of Uruk colonisation, although the distribution of Uruk material culture is suggestive of some expansion from the south, particularly in the middle Euphrates Valley. However, the nature of this expansion, whether relating to political control, agricultural intensification, population rise or cultural links remains unclear (Akkermans and Schwarz 2003, 202–5). This first phase of urbanisation was short-lived, and the early third millennium sees a period of ruralisation. However, the vestiges of urbanism lived on in specialised rural sites associated with arable or pastoral husbandry or the extraction and processing of natural resources, such as salt. The region had, therefore, been transformed by urbanism, even if the urban sites themselves did not persist.

Between c2600–2000 BCE the region saw a second phase of urbanisation, termed the ‘second urban revolution’, in which a number of city states became established. These were typically enclosed settlements, with administrative and religious buildings on a tell site, surrounded by a lower city. These were settlements where large scale craft production, particularly of pottery, took place and where royal control could be exerted over metalworking. Clay tablets provide evidence of trade and the importance of wool to the economy (Akkermans and Schwarz 2003, 268–70). A number of potential causes for this second phase of urbanisation have been put forward: the development of the capacity to produce an agricultural surplus to support a city, pressures caused by warfare and defence, and the growth of long distance trade. The nature of the relationship between northern Mesopotamian cities and those in the south also poses a problem; were these towns planted, developed through contact with the south or emulations of the situation there (Akkermans and Schwarz 2003, 275)? In addressing these problems scholars have recognised that urbanism is not an isolated process and is one which both transforms and is transformed by society (Emberling 2003, 255–6).

A major development in understanding urbanism in the region has been the identification of multiple pathways to urbanism (Lawrence and Wilkinson 2015; Wilkinson *et al* 2014). This work has critiqued the prevailing orthodoxy of a linear progression to complexity, essentially based upon the band-tribe-chieftan-state model, which has characterised the understanding of the region, by identifying regional and temporal differences in processes of urbanisation (see Ur 2014, 250 for a critique). This work highlights how the urban centres of the Chalcolithic (c4400–3000 BCE) are different in character to later settlements, being smaller and focussed in the well-watered lowlands, and characterised as ‘hubs’ within regional exchange and political networks (Lawrence and Wilkinson 2015, 333). The development of these centres was driven by a number of factors, including the exchange of raw materials such as metals and obsidian (Ur 2010, 395). The Bronze Age ‘second urban revolution’ saw a more diverse range of urban centres develop, which must be understood in relation to surrounding rural settlements. In some places urban growth took place as a part of wider settlement expansion, for example at Sweyhat, whilst elsewhere, for example at Tell Hamoukar, urbanisation led to an absorption of rural settlements. Lawrence and Wilkinson (2015, 337) term these exogenous and endogenous urban centres respectively. Whilst both types of

town have similar morphologies, they likely had different causes, exogenous centres being facilitated by agricultural intensification and, particularly, the expansion of pastoralism, whilst the endogenous centres were facilitated by the expansion of agricultural production in the already well settled fertile basins. Recent research (Wilkinson *et al* 2014; Lawrence and Wilkinson 2015; Ur 2014) has highlighted complexity in this process of urbanisation and, therefore, this case provides a useful case study for how assemblage thought might be applied to understanding urban development in a particular region.

Assembling early urbanism

Dan Lawrence and Tony Wilkinson's (2015) and Jason Ur's (2014) research has challenged the assumption of a simple linear progression to urbanism in this region, highlighting the transformations caused by earlier processes of urbanisation and the ways in which different types of relations, with different temporalities, come together in the process of urban development. For DeLanda (1997, 28) "cities arise from the flow of matter-energy, but once a town's mineral infrastructure (both the physical presence of the town and its institutions) has emerged, it reacts to those flows". In simple terms DeLanda proposes that we can see urbanisation as emerging from the intensification of energy flows (such as increasing agricultural surplus) and also acting to cause transformations. Whilst cities exhibit evidence of planning in some form, as Jane Bennett (2010, 31) is at pains to point out "there was never a time when human agency was acting other than in an interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity". In other words, just as it is untenable to see urbanism as caused by an enabling environment or agricultural surplus, it is equally untenable to argue that towns developed purely from human intentionality. Thinking about urbanism as a process of assemblage immediately forces us to think in terms of flows and unpredictability, to acknowledge that even from the start an abstract idea of urbanism could not be realised; we must concede that materials will play a role. This is particularly powerful when we are thinking about the first cities, as clearly there was no initial concept of urbanisation and we can expect difference, as city assemblages emerge as rhizomatic entanglings which cause unpredictable effects. It is, however, worth reflecting on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, 418–9) writing on the state in thinking about urban emergence. They argue that non-state societies (nomads in their language) are aware of the state and that they use specific mechanisms to ward it off. This relates to a more extensive discussion in *Anti-Oedipus*, in which they state that "the primitive machine is not ignorant of exchange, commerce and industry; it exorcises them, cordon[s] them off, encastes them . . . so that the flows of exchange and the flows of production do not manage to break the codes in favor of their abstract or fictional quantities" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 178); it is the fear of the decoded flow which wards off commerce and capitalism. As such, the city can be seen as a virtual capacity of pre-urban societies, in that the city is not an entity as much as the spatialisation of intensive processes and therefore it is through these processes that the urban becomes actualised, not as a

pre-formed idea of a settlement type or societal formation, but rather as the result of the coding mechanisms which prevent urban existence being broken down. These mechanisms in turn can be related to the way in which the state “forms a new territorialised full body; on the other hand it maintains old territorialities, integrates them as parts or organs of production in the new machine” (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 229). In other words for Deleuze and Guattari the actualisation of the state, a virtual capacity of any society, over-codes production, creating potential for new formations such as the city to emerge. In taking this literally there is a danger of replicating old arguments about the relationship between cities and states, but what we can take from their ideas is the notion that the potential for the city may long pre-exist the city, in that the processes which constitute it already exist but are unable to produce the city until they become de- or over-coded.

Critically these processes and affects expanded beyond the cities themselves. It has now been identified that processes of dwelling in the countryside were transformed by the process of urbanisation and the vestiges of this process linger in the presence of specialised sites. Following Andrew Jones and Emilie Sibbesson (2013) we can see urbanism emerging at the intersection of a number of flows, in which interaction resulted in irreversible processes of transformation, which cut across and enfold scale (see Harris 2017a for a consideration of Neolithic Britain in these terms). Each flow, be it pottery, people or animals, was caught in processes of ‘becoming urban’ as both an entity territorialised into an urban assemblage and as a deterritorialised assemblage in itself, participating in other processes (domesticity, rural life, religion) at multiple scales. Crucially, this process of territorialisation is transformative, as the emergence of urban infrastructure served to stratify these entities, coding flows and striating space to create a persistent urban place, but one which could become decoded as its components were deterritorialised into other performances. As a molar entity, the city over-coded flows, acting upon the components which constitute it (Wallenstein 2016, 112), to paraphrase Ian Buchanan (2005, 22) “if a label like [urban] has any substance . . . it must imply a radical transformation of subjectivity”; the city overcodes a territory, changing the relations of exteriority out of which its components are formed, transforming them through deterritorialisation. Yet, as a molecular composition, the city is also formed of these components which change the city as they are themselves transformed, as DeLanda (2006, 11) puts it: “relations of exteriority also imply that the properties of component parts can never explain the relations which constitute a whole. The city, therefore, is an aggregate of relations which form along multiple temporal and spatial axes (Boumeester and Radman 2016, 49). Pottery production, for example, may be over-coded by the development of urban workshops and markets, yet the changes to pottery production also open up spaces for the city to be transformed through the implications of this activity. We might characterise this change as a process of phase transition, an intensification of action at the molecular level which expands outwards, not creating a network of identical towns at the molar level, but leading to related processes of transformation (see DeLanda 2016, 117; Crellin 2017).

For example, the earliest phases at Tell Brak are characterised by monumental architecture and evidence of organised craft production and suburban settlement. A range of raw materials such as obsidian, shell and jasper, some brought over substantial distances, were worked here. The settlement is also situated in a position where it controls communication routes (Oates *et al* 2006). We can, therefore, identify this settlement as emerging at a location in the landscape through which these flows of materials and goods could pass, but these resources alone are not enough to lead to the emergence of an urban (or proto-urban) centre, as hubs to use Lawrence and Wilkinson's (2015) term. The city was enmeshed in other forms of societal transformation, the development of increasing social stratification, literacy and organised religion, for example (Ur 2010, 395), all of which are not phenomena or items on a checklist for defining the urban, but processes that were both implicated in and influenced by processes of urban development. Rather than laying the foundations for urban development, sites like Tell Brak were emergent performances. They developed their own temporalities as the structures introduce a degree of material durability, but were also fluid. Craft production was reliant on the continued flow of resources, religious practice implicated built structures, people and objects in the re-iteration of ritual performances which were given meaning by, and gave meaning to, these structures. The economy was reliant upon the ongoing interactions with the land and natural environment. Urbanism emerged at the intersection of these processes, as a process of messy entanglement. Tell Brak, like any town, was not a stable settlement, but one which was formed through repeated performance, shaped by the emerging built environment. These were activities which had previously taken place, albeit at different levels of intensity, elsewhere in the landscape. Urbanism was a re-articulation of these different processes, creating different, spatialised confederations of people, things and spaces; it emerged through different forms of entanglement, rather than from a pre-urban root and it was not only transformed by the flows of energy coming into it, but also itself transformed its wider region. As DeLanda (2005, 104) demonstrates, the relationship between city and region is relational, with one defining the other with flows of energy moving between them. The reasons for ruralisation in the early third millennium are disputed, but this two-way flow of matter and energy – of affect – can be seen in the ways that urbanism had transformed the countryside and, ultimately, created forms of rural life which could enable further urban development in the Bronze Age.

A particular feature of Bronze Age urbanism is the expansion of settlement into areas which might be considered marginal, what Wilkinson *et al* (2014, 54) term 'the zone of uncertainty', where rainfall is less reliable and which might be considered as unsuitable for agriculture performed at the subsistence level. The expansion of settlement into this region is suggestive of a socio-economic change whereby risk can be more comfortably mitigated. The region is characterised by pastoralism, in some cases sponsored by the emergent states and their royal households, showing how risk could be absorbed by the wider networks of which these settlements were part, at least for a period of time. In areas of pastoral expansion urban centres

were required for the gathering of surplus and the processing of wool, a major component of the regional economy (Wilkinson *et al* 2014, 55–7). These urban centres were a part of wide reaching networks and did not have a single developmental trajectory or character.

These exogenous urban centres are complicated as they mark expansion into areas which had not previously been intensively occupied. It is these which are particularly fruitful for an assemblage based approach as we can seek to trace how the entanglement of coded flows of social organisation, resources and people came together to create the causality for urban places to unfold. An example of one such centre is al-Rawda (Castel and Peltenburg 2007), situated within the arid zone. Here a dense settlement has been identified, with regular streets suggestive of planning, with mudbrick ramparts and specialised religious structures. The site was enrolled in expansive exchange networks reaching to the Mediterranean, India and Egypt and the excavators suggest that pastoralists played a key role in the transportation of goods and resources.

The development of al-Rawda might appear as an event, but was, in fact an *emergence*; an ongoing process of becoming rather than a singular moment of formation. It emerged out of a range of related interactions between people, the environment, goods and resources. The social space of al-Rawda was smooth, but the deterritorialisation of economic processes over-coded and striated it, urban transformations elsewhere seemingly coded certain flows, leading to the emergence of a material urban form mirrored elsewhere in the region (we might think back to the discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's "Idea of the State" discussed above). These transformations were not just economic; the performance of religion and administration caused the settlement to develop in a particular way and this mobile form of urbanism served to code interactions and create distinctly urban spaces. Following DeLanda (1997, 28) we might characterise al-Rawda as an intensification of flows of matter and energy; flows which were already coded by urban performances elsewhere, making them assemblage convertors as actants were enfolded into action in new ways, with new effects. Crucially, al-Rawda developed at the intersection of arable and pastoral regimes, with flows of livestock and wool, combined with an increasing population, creating the need for centres for the storage and marketing of goods, and the gathering of agricultural surplus to feed the growing population. Seeing al-Rawda as a gateway site to resources casts its development in a purely economic light, but the processes through which it formed were less distinct than such an interpretation proposes. Instead we can view it as emerging from the coming together of widely deterritorialised networks of exchange and power and local performances of pastoral agriculture, to create a process of urbanisation, which was locally distinctive but also coded by distant urban performances.

At the regional scale Wilkinson *et al* (2014) argue that urbanism was not a continuous process but rather one which operated in pulses, with new settlements developing not as a single event but in relation to various circumstances arising. This idea of a pulsating process, of waves of urbanism being sent outwards by social processes, is a powerful one for building a refined understanding of urban chronologies

and seeing urbanisation not as a single event but as a series of episodes. In defining cities and towns as hubs and upstarts, Lawrence and Wilkinson (2015) have identified two different *processes*, of exogenous and endogenous urbanism. The identification of multiple paths to urbanism supports the notion that urban development is unpredictable, but similarities between these settlements also shows a process of urban learning, as ideas of urban space and social structure circulated. This perspective is important because it introduces a notion of non-linearity, of cities not developing in a straightforward way, but as emerging from immediate relations and surfaced experiences, emerging from particular combinations of local and wider interactions. What Lawrence and Wilkinson's (2015) identification of alternative pathways to urbanism demonstrates is that society was not 'transported' to a state of urbanism but, rather, urbanism emerged out of particular historical circumstances.

As Ur (2010, 415) recognises, early urbanism appears to be an accidental emergence, the result of unplanned forces but by the third millennium an idea of urbanism, coded by previous iterations of urban life, circulated and resulted in places with similar plans and institutional organisation. Furthermore, urban performances elsewhere coded flows and had a ripple effect as they deterritorialised the performances of dispersed urban centres into one another. If, following Lawrence and Wilkinson (2015), we characterise the Chalcolithic urban centres as 'hubs', they were, by definition, formed at the nexus of chains of interactions and, although these towns ultimately faded, they were transformative, coding social spaces, leading to the emergence of particular trajectories to Bronze Age urbanism. These Chalcolithic centres themselves emerged from existing dense, but not fully urbanised, settlements and, in places, may have emerged in particular ways through the performance of other urban centres such as Uruk (Ur 2010, 391–3). This coding can be seen in the way that rural settlements were transformed by the first urban centres from being places based around subsistence economies to becoming specialised economic units, the presence of which contributed to the emergence of particular forms of urbanisation. Thinking through early towns and cities as assemblages therefore presents an alternative way of conceptualising these places, as discontinuous bundles of practices, which are drawn from multiple places and which code future interactions.

Meshworks and hierarchies

If we follow Bennett in accepting that urbanism cannot have arisen purely as the result of human agency, it becomes necessary to enquire into the ways in which power was manifest within these new urban centres. DeLanda (1997, 32) emphasises a distinction between "self-organised meshworks" and "hierarchies of uniform elements" (roughly equating to DeLanda's distinction between assemblage and stratum); that is between formations that are weakly coded and loosely territorialised and which occupy a smooth space, and tightly coded and territorialised, striated spaces. Bureaucracy, which exists as a means of effecting "a planned extraction of energy surpluses (taxes, tributes, rents, forced labour)" (DeLanda 1997, 31) might

be seen as characteristic of a hierarchy, whilst less rigid socio-economic distinction is characteristic of a meshwork. Arguing for non-human influence (such as climatic change) within the emergence of urbanism is not to deny human intentionality or the fact that power, critically as a process, is historically contingent, being worked at and made durable by the enacting of bureaucracy. However, a hierarchy which is too rigid does not give a place the ability to grow and emerge; if meshwork components are overwhelmed then urban dynamics cannot emerge and places may even prove to lack resilience (DeLanda 1997, 34); although regulated, merchants must have freedom to trade and artisans to produce goods.

Critically, power should not only be conceptualised as being exerted over people. We have already seen how vibrant materials can impact upon the emergence of cities, and the exercising of power over resources and materials is also a characteristic of a hierarchical process of urbanisation. This point can be illustrated by an example from outside of the immediate area discussed here, at the early Bronze Age site of *Ran an-Numayra* in Jordan (White *et al* 2014). Here, urban growth, fuelled by an unsustainable agricultural regime focussed on the cultivation of flax, grapes and barley, has been argued to have caused the collapse of an emerging urban centre. Intensive agriculture enabled urban growth, with the process of urbanisation transforming agriculture in the immediate environs of the site. But power and agency are not only human characteristics and this regime exacerbated soil salinisation. *Ran an-Numayra* seems to have lacked the ability to call on agricultural surplus from elsewhere and it eventually failed. What we see then is the complexity of processes which become more apparent through failure. A process of urbanisation here was historically contingent as a community acquired the capacity to intensify agricultural production – a process presumably linked with a process of stratification of labour, land and resources. The vibrant nature of the crops served to de-stratify this assemblage, showing how power and agency emerge through relations and need not be anthropocentric, and that if too tightly hierarchised places may fail. DeLanda (1997, 121–3) reflects on the ways that cities fall within ecosystems and the implications of this for a dialectic emerging between the city and the surroundings, not in the sense of creating a dualism between urban and rural, but in thinking about the ways in which the city is a component of the environment, which might, at times, be the cause of environmental change or, indeed, be subject to it, with the implication that coding structures may be smoothed or over-coded. We can, therefore, see urbanism being performed in increasingly intense ways and making these places increasingly distinctive. However, as towns and cities are deterritorialised, this process also transformed the wider realms within which the cities interacted, and were subject to wider changes. Hence, whilst archaeologists are prone to talk about the collapse of states or urban systems, it is more productive to explore how these coding structures were, once again, transformed or over-coded; in other words to explore the agency or power emerging from urban performances and the agency acting upon urban performances, to consider the extent to which the city becomes a process of anti-production (in which excessive coding and territorialisation restrict the ability of the city to function) or

becomes torn apart by movements of deterritorialisation which lead to its fragmentation along multiple lines of flight (Wallenstein 2016, 118).

Yet, where this freedom exists there is also the potential of power to emerge from urban performances, as we have seen, for example, in the case of informal settlements (see also Purcell 2016, 101). No city can be entirely hierarchical or entirely smooth, but at different times and through different lenses, different cities may appear at various places along this spectrum; any composition is always a mixture of smooth and striated space and each constantly gives way to the other (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 581; Buchanan and Lambert 2005, 5). Power then is not simply imposed upon the urban landscape but surfaces from past interactions and emerges from performances of urban life.

Within this context, urbanisation is typically associated with processes of state formation. As has already been touched upon through a consideration of Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the state, the idea of a progression towards states and, indeed, of urbanisation in this sense, is problematic from an assemblage perspective. For DeLanda, the 'state' might be considered a reified generality – a concept which implies sameness and an entity which exists prior to action.¹ We can acknowledge that power emerged from relations in the pre-urban period and had implications for historically contingent processes of urbanisation and that measures were taken to sustain power through the use of bureaucracy, as evidenced through clay tablets for example. But power continued to emerge from relations too. This opens up an important fracture in the idea of an elite led process of urbanism. This implies that power already existed and that cities developed at the whim of this powerful elite. It ignores the position that social relations are negotiations and that cities are materialisations of these negotiations. We can suggest, therefore, that urban communities need not have been subjugated or controlled, but had some role in shaping the emergent urban structures.

Such a position is taken by Ur (2014), who argues that we should look beyond elite imposition in considering how urbanism emerges. He argues that urbanism was not a new concept imposed on a society, but, rather, was a re-articulation of existing structures, specifically the household. The house forms seen at sites such as Tell Brak are similar to those found on earlier rural sites, showing how elements of spatial and social organisation persisted within the urban setting. Urbanity did not exist prior to action, but emerged as a particular translation of a process of dwelling in a new place. Ur considers continuity in household architecture as evidence for continuity in domestic performances from the pre-urban to urbanised periods, with the household acting as a metaphor which structured urban life; with 'the state', a term which has no direct correlate in contemporary literary sources, being better conceptualised as the extended royal household (Ur 2014, 256). From a DeLandaean perspective, the state itself becomes a network of households, a set of sets, a process through which these households extend beyond their bounds, or are deterritorialised into a wider assemblage of extended kinship which structured urban growth. As such, the power structures within towns were, Ur argues, based around mutual dependence rather than subjugation, with urban living being

transformed by and transforming the ways in which society was articulated. This approach sees urbanism as historically contingent, drawing on existing ways of living with the world, with urbanism not being a revolution but rather a re-articulation. By focussing on process we come to realise that we can “leave behind the dream of a revolution that changes the entire system” (DeLanda 2016, 48) by shifting our focus from the reified generalities of states and cities to focus on individual singularities of urban performances which resonate across scales.

Such an approach forces us to contemplate the processes through which these ‘states’ and ‘cities’ emerged and are defined. The space of the pre-urban Ubaid period was not entirely smooth; everyday processes of dwelling coded flows and it was these coding structures, such as concepts of kinship, which were articulated in the processes of becoming urban. Rather than being imposed on a community and a space, as these places were performed and re-iterated urbanism gradually became more distinct and visible, as performances of urban life and urban bureaucracy serve to striate urban space and code the flows which constitute it. Whilst some activities and relations are unique to urban assemblages, others, such as the domestic processes described by Ur are ubiquitous, meaning that just because actions take place in what we recognise as an ‘urban’ setting, they need not be distinctly urban entanglements. Here we can see how the town is not a single entity but a messy entanglement, part hierarchy, part meshwork, internally cohesive but with scope for relations to expand beyond it. Urbanity is a flickering characteristic (Jervis 2016a, 392), becoming visible through some performances and not through others, even though all are enrolled in the process of place making. A fundamental difference between the city and the previous subsistence based settlements was the reliance on external providers for subsistence, which necessitated the emergence of a bureaucracy of food storage and distribution, for example. Urban distinctiveness is not a form of essence, but a surfacing in particular sets of everyday interactions – for example the performance of trade within a fixed space – but is less apparent in other interactions – such as the inhabitation of the domestic spaces. Just as artefacts might transition from object to thing so a place might reveal itself as urban through some interactions and not through others as practices, both of dwelling and of research, cause different realities to actualise (see Law 2004).

Summary

Urbanism is just one potential outcome of the processes described here, and this is well illustrated by the variety of different forms that urban places themselves might take. However, whilst territorialising, urban centres are necessarily deterritorialised (their performance extends beyond their physical boundaries). We see, in Ur’s (2010) analysis how ideas of urbanism circulated and were enacted in the development of Bronze Age urban centres, but also in Wilkinson *et al’s* (2014) analysis how urbanism was inseparably enmeshed in performances of agriculture, production and exchange. I (Jervis 2016a) have argued that the agency for urban development

can be seen as emerging at the intersection of different scales of interaction. It is not a process which can simply be explained by seeing a top-down form of agency in which towns and cities are imposed upon the landscape, but, equally, towns cannot exist without some dialogue with wider economic or political networks, what John Law (2004) terms the hinterlands of assemblages. Terms such as ‘the market’ and ‘society’ are reified generalities and, therefore, only exist as abstractions, but they are abstractions which, when unpackaged, consist of chains of interaction and engagements; they are, themselves, assemblages which are widely deterritorialised, emerging from, but also shaping, localised, or territorialised, performances.

We know that Bronze Age urbanism was not mono-causal. The work of Wilkinson *et al* (2014) highlights how it was particular socio-economic and environmental conditions which created the potential for urban forms to emerge. What then, has an assemblage approach told us about early urbanism? It has demonstrated that towns are not isolated developments but emerge from ongoing performances of dwelling which are not just representative of cultural and societal norms but are coded by them and are also transformative in themselves. Neither the state nor the city, both being reified generalities, can exist in any way prior to action, as is implied by an evolutionary model of increasing complexity. Instead the city is immanent, continually emerging from particular sets of interactions which become entangled within specific spatial locations. Urbanism is not a single state to be achieved, but is an articulation of particular ways of coding flows and also generates new social structures, new ways of living in and with the world, and rather than collapsing, can be seen as transforming themselves. Therefore, gradients of urbanism, as a distinctive mode of becoming, exist. Urbanism surfaces through some performances, such as intensive craft production, but is less visible through others, such as the inhabiting of domestic spaces. Places are not either urban or non-urban, but, instead urbanism can be seen as a flickering quality as urban coding becomes more or less prevalent in particular performances. Furthermore, towns are not a something at the centre of a system; whilst they influence their hinterland (M.E. Smith 2007), they are also influenced by it, with their urban status, their distinctiveness, emerging and being maintained through the nature of the dialogue through which these arenas deterritorialise into each other. Focussing on a process of urbanisation in isolation, or simply seeking the contextual causes of urbanisation therefore only reveals part of the picture. To understand urban places as individual entities, or as a general class of place is to miss the point that the objects of study are the processes which enfold spatial and temporal scales and crystallise as urban settlement, an analysis that does not talk in terms of “physical architectonic object, but . . . complex assemblages of power and desire” (Wallenstein 2016, 120), to understand the urban as intensive process rather than extensive space. Focussing on the processes through which urban places are distributed across scales is a key opportunity afforded by assemblage approaches and is the subject of the final case study in this chapter, which looks at the urban archaeology of early medieval Europe and the implications of assemblage thought for studying urbanism as a distributed process.

Assemblage urbanism across scales

In the 7th–8th centuries CE a network of trading centres emerged around the coastal zone of northern Europe (Figure 4.3). The urban status of these sites, known as emporia or wics, has been much debated but it is clear that they are distinctive in terms of their scale and function from other contemporary settlements (see Cowie and Hill 2001; Hodges 2012; Loveluck 2013). In England the areas occupied by the wics of Gippeswic (Ipswich) (Suffolk County Archaeological Service 2015), Lundenwic (London) (Malcolm *et al* 2003; Cowie and Blackmore 2012), Hamwic (Southampton) (Holdsworth 1980; Morton 1992; Andrews 1997; Birbeck and Smith 2005) and Eorforwic (York) (Kemp 1996; Spall and Toop 2008) have been recognised. For our purposes these sites are useful for exploring

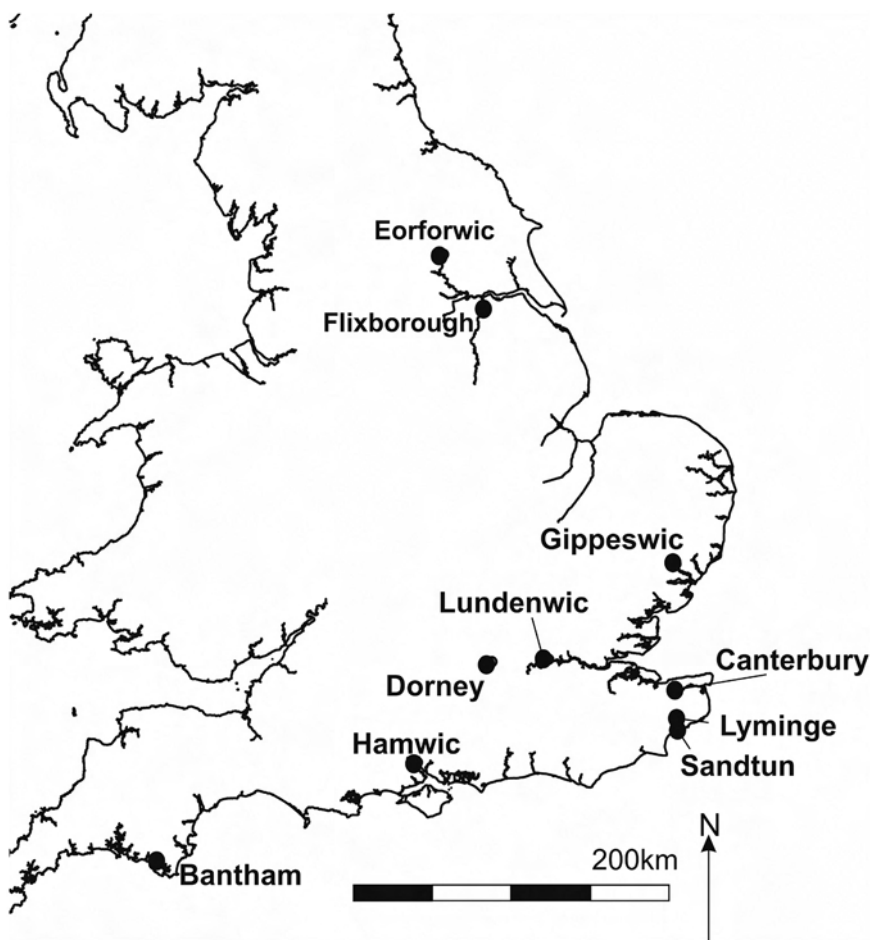


FIGURE 4.3 Map of Britain showing the location of sites mentioned in the text.
Image: Ben Jervis.

issues of scale and connectivity. Typically, research has focussed on characterising the archaeology of these centres, determining their foundation date and range of economic contacts, with a particular emphasis on overseas trade. In comparison with a large body of work on their overseas contacts, their links to their regions have been less intensively studied (Naylor 2016, 18). It is my contention that by examining wics as assemblages we can begin to explore relations in a different manner, not as 'global' or 'local' but as multi-scalar, productive and flowing (see also Jervis 2011). Rather than seeing wics as nodes in trading networks, my intention is to think about how they emerge from and intensify flows of goods. A similar approach has been developed by Søren Sindbæk (2007) who began to explore how emergent urban centres in Scandinavia developed at 'boundary-locations' where political, economic and geographic factors combined in ways which afforded long distance trade.

When studying wics we make a particular assemblage the focus of our enquiry and, in doing so, we are immediately confronted with the issue of scale. The wic itself is an assemblage to be unpacked, but it is also a part of multiple other assemblages, which form at different scales and in different times and places. It is a part of an assemblage of other wic sites, reified in documentary references and through archaeological study which has identified them as a specific class of site distinctive in terms of their economy and size to other sites of the period. Indeed, some scholars (Hodges 1982; see also Skre 2008) have set out to homogenise these sites through the development of a typology of site classes, with implications for the ways in which they enter into discourse (see discussion of archaeological types in Chapter 3). This homogenising of the category of site masks the specificity of each unfolding of the wic assemblage, but does have the advantage of revealing similarities between them (although it is worth noting that Hodges (2012, 114) now accepts that "the history of the emporia cannot be reduced to a common story" and the diversity of early medieval sites of all types is a central theme of his more recent work). Wics, as a 'type' of site, are also a part of a wider assemblage of early medieval trading sites, some of which they may be directly connected to and others which they are linked with by virtue of a shared function. This is a heterogeneous group ranging from wics to beach markets such as Bantham (Devon) (Reed *et al* 2011) and inland 'productive sites' (locations with unusually high quantities of metal artefacts and coinage, typically identified through metal detecting; Pestell and Ulmschneider 2003), linked through the performance of trade and flows of goods, resources and coinage. The wic is also a part of a regional economic assemblage, through which flows of goods, resources, money and people move. These scales are traversed in different ways. We may focus on the way that the wic acts as a molar entity in itself, or consider how it is a composition of molecular components, themselves deterritorialised across scales, pulling the wic assemblage into a range of multi-scalar assemblages. Examples might be the study of buildings (Croix 2015), portable goods such as pottery (e.g. Hodges 1981; Jervis 2011; Blinkhorn 2012) or zooarchaeological remains (e.g. Crabtree 1996; 2010). Our study may focus on 'local' processes – the production of houses or use of

pottery – or ‘global’ processes, such as economic development at regional scales. Assemblage approaches allow us to conflate these scales, to understand that the ‘global’ is always ‘local’, with local performances constituting a wider assemblage and ‘externalities’ overflowing, or deterritorialising, with their effect reverberating across scales (see also Latour 2005, 173–90). An assemblage approach, I propose, can help us to overcome these distinctions between scales, to explore how the local and the global were implicated with each other. Furthermore, debate over the development of wics is still polarised in regard to the ‘prime mover’; in simple terms between seeing these sites as driven by commerce (the trade model) or rural production (Hodges 2012, 3–15). An assemblage approach helps us to move from attributing causality to a particular driver, instead creating a situation in which we can expand upon Richard Hodges’ (2012, 137–8) proposition that “the origins of economic change [can be placed] in the interaction between the new Merovingian landowners, the maritime communities of the English Channel and the North Sea, and the emerging tribal elites”, as well as with the church. Power is an important issue here, and a concern with where power lies in the formation and functioning of the emporia has been instrumental in the polarising of debates. Adopting an assemblage approach therefore has a further benefit, of helping us to identify multiple forms of power emerging out of relations, which can allow us to take a more realist approach that recognises the complexity of the processes manifest in these particular urban formations.

Here, therefore, I propose that wics are performed as distributed processes, and that by examining the relations of which they are constituted we can understand how performances resonated across scales. Critically, we cannot see scales as neatly nested into each other (Harris 2017a, 133) and must acknowledge that the molar and molecular have implications for each other, with the molar being, at the same time, a molecular component of other molar entities (Harris 2017a, 133). We can therefore view any of our objects of study – the wic, the pot, the region – as molecular or molar. This places an emphasis on processes of relational becoming and the multiplicity of reality. The wic itself has capacity to develop as many different kinds of place – as a place of trade, manufacture and sanctuary – all are linked together.

Wics have capacities which are actual and virtual. Both are real but whereas actual properties are measurable and instigated in performances, virtual capacities await actualisation, they might be seen as potential affordances, recognised and able to be actualised through action. Therefore, the wic as trading centre is no more or less real than the wic as settlement or, indeed, as archaeological site; these realities emerge through the performance of different relations which actualise different capacities of the wic assemblage (see Law 2004, 54–5). Rather than creating wics, hinterlands, or even the early medieval period, as reified generalities, as essential phenomena, we can think about how different iterations might be actualised through the performance of multi-scalar processes, both through past action and through contemporary research practices (Harris 2017a, 135). This virtual element of the assemblage is what Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 164) call ‘the diagram’. Just

because it is virtual, it does not mean that it is not real; it is historically contingent, emerging from relations. The diagram does not give the early medieval period or the urban phenomenon essence but does give it some structure. This allows us to follow potential deterritorialisations to different scales, to acknowledge that a pot is not only for cooking but that it can be actualised as an item of trade or in the mediation of identity, or to consider that wics exist as entities in themselves but also as wider distributed processes. The actualisation of the virtual capacities of one assemblage may have implications for others, causing them to unfold in different ways. Therefore this process of actualisation is linked to processes of change and transition, as these actualisations have effect, rippling out, gradually creating distinct sets of relations through the performance of the wic, through which urban distinction might be seen to emerge (see Gillespie 2015, 47 for a consideration of the transformative implications of assemblages). Therefore, the distinction between urban and rural is not essential, but emerges incrementally through the performance of the wic. We can propose, therefore, that assemblages do not exist at scales but create scale through their performance and deterritorialisation as 'local' and 'global' become defined through their relations with each other.

Wics as distributed processes: Mapping regions

We have already seen in the case of Mesopotamia how processes of urbanisation have implications for their wider regions. As discussed above, through the performance of urban places productive relations form, which accumulate to form phase transitions, creating difference between town and country and to bring about capacities for potential action and meanings to emerge. How then can we go about exploring these multi-scalar processes? I propose that this can only be achieved by adopting new ways of working. Previous approaches to wics and the early medieval economy have been more generally focussed on network approaches – the tracing of connections through a mode of enquiry akin to Tim Ingold's 'transportation', for example the tracing of luxury trade goods by Hodges (1982; an approach which he now (Hodges 2012) acknowledges overplayed the importance of commerce). The alternative is, of course, to wayfare or to map connections and associations, allowing us to explore the performative and transformative nature of interactions. What I am proposing therefore is rather than seeing towns as fixed entities, or nodes within a trading network, that they are, in fact, distributed processes. Recent work in Scandinavia (Ashby *et al* 2015), although not drawing specifically on assemblage approaches, demonstrates this point well. Reindeer antler, critical for use in in craft production in the emerging urban settlements, was systematically gathered from Arctic regions situated significant distances away from the centres themselves. Through this lens we can see the connections through which the town was performed as expanding beyond the urban limits into distant places; if we view towns as socio-spatial processes they overflow any physical boundary (Callon 1999). Rather than simply seeing antler as being transported to the towns, transformed into objects and then exported, we can view the collection and processing

of antler as a part of the urban performance, the process of gathering of which the town is constituted. This is similar to the way engagement with the military models discussed in Chapter 3 causes us to question the ontological position of the town in relation to the model.

We can return to DeLanda's contention that towns can be perceived as "sets of sets" or "assemblages of assemblages", introduced above. Whilst we can see this within the physical landscape of the town, as a patchwork of intersecting spheres of interaction, as formed of performances of households, markets and churches, we can also see this in the way that the urban processes are distributed and deterritorialised into other performances in their hinterland. In her study of the supply of meat and animals to Ipswich, Pam Crabtree (1996) shows how the presence of Ipswich had implications for rural producers, who specialised in particular types of husbandry for the urban market. Although not directly performed as a part of the urban assemblage, we can see here how towns and regions emerge *with* each other, as these assemblages bleed into one another, causing them to act upon each other. We cannot see the urban as existing in some arbitrary way as in opposition to an equally abstract rural. A network perspective would see the wic as joined to the countryside, but here we can perceive them emerging as joined *with* each other (see Ingold 2016), as coming into contact and becoming something different, a configuration which does not fit a neat distinction between urban and rural, as a new assemblage. This relationship is highlighted as one of importance, and ambiguity, by Hodges (2012, 66); the rural and the urban are clearly not separate economies, but are connected and have implications for each other. If we think in this way, a divide between 'regional' hinterlands and overseas trade contacts, as well as what is physically within or outside of the wic, becomes flattened. Our focus shifts to understanding how flows move and affect one another, how they intermingle in the emergence of the wic and the potential trajectories of development at multiple scales that these interactions afford, which becomes critical. As such, we can view society and economy as developing with the wics, rather than existing in some prior state as a reified generality to which the wics are subject. Therefore, as the range of assemblages of which the wic is a part attests, these local interactions also ripple outwards and are affected by local interactions elsewhere – the distant becomes localised through action. This is how, by working across scales and mapping assemblages we can move from transporting to wayfaring, to understand flows of affect and the intensity of relations, rather than simply mapping networks and identifying instances of movement. Assemblage forces us not to begin by problematising the urban as opposed to the rural but to bring the rural into enquiry and understand how it developed in relation to the urban, exploring the work through which similarity and difference, influence and reliability emerged, rather than simply taking them for granted.

Archaeologists commonly talk about towns as having hinterlands, but the meaning of this term is ambiguous. It might mean the area over which they exert some influence (either economic or social), or the area which they draw upon for resources. If we follow DeLanda in identifying the town as a distributed process

then it is necessary to pay closer attention to how we define regions. Cities and regions, DeLanda (2006, 104) proposes, emerge in relation to one another and, therefore, we might consider that there is the capacity in relations for multiple regions to exist, just as we might see multiple forms of socio-spatial process emerge within towns. Recent work by John Naylor (2016) has sought to address this precise issue. He highlights that multiple forms of hinterland relationship exist; what he defines as the “impact hinterland” (the region directly around the wic which is impacted by its presence), “productive hinterlands” (the region from which resources worked within the settlement are drawn), “subsistence hinterlands” (from which foodstuffs are procured) and “social hinterlands” (in which the wics have a transformative impact on society). This work also corresponds well with work by Frans Theuws (2008) which stresses the diversity of rural forms of settlement and administration, which are homogenised by the use of specific labels in historical texts. My intention here is not to validate or dispute the existence of these hinterlands (or indeed propose the existence of other types), but to use this idea as a point of departure for exploring the distributed nature of wics and the effective nature of relations between wics and their regions. Just as spheres of interactions cut across urban landscapes, so they also expand beyond its physical limits. Furthermore, by focussing on relations it is my intention to demonstrate that the artificial divide between international and local connections can be broken down, to explore these distributed urban processes in the round.

Wics were largely reliant on their regions for food supplies: they are distinctive, for example, in featuring pits for the storage of grain (Hodges 2012, 58). These were unusual settlements in this period as they did not have an agricultural base, but shaped and were shaped by their wider regions. Within Hamwic there is no clear evidence of social distinction within the food remains (Bourdillon 1980). Cattle were the principal food animal, followed by sheep and pigs, with sheep probably being more important for their wool than their meat. Changes in the size of animals from the early Anglo-Saxon period are suggestive of the adoption of specialised husbandry management techniques, with the older age of animals suggesting that they were not bred specifically for consumption as meat in the wic. We can see here how variation within the population of specific species comes to be defined by the relations of which those animals are a part (see Harris 2014, 337–8); we can see the animals as vibrant matter, defined through their relations of exteriority, but also as territorialised into an intensive urban space which exceeds the physical limits of the wic centres. This equates well with the situation around Ipswich, where Crabtree (1996) has identified increasing specialisation in rural production, suggesting that was driven by urban demand for craft resources, wool for export and meat.

Whether this change was market driven or directed by elites may, in part, rest on one’s interpretation of the emergence of the wics themselves. Whilst it is clear that there was royal control over the collection of tolls, it remains disputed whether the wics were a top-down initiative intended to control trade or a phenomenon emerging through the performance of trade by merchants (Loveluck 2013, 212).

It is likely that the reality is that they emerged from multiple places, along multiple trajectories, which become visible or remain masked depending upon the emphasis of study; to see a molar category of wic developing masks the distinctive molecular processes at play and homogenises this group of settlements which, in fact, each have unique elements. Rather than seeking to singularise causality, we can consider the power to shape the economic future as emerging out of relations, constrained by striations but unfolding in the smooth spaces between them. Commerce, agriculture and politics all set particular courses of action in train but also unleashed Bodies without Organs, creating opportunities for new entanglements to occur and for their consequences to unfold in unpredictable ways (see discussion of the city as a Body without Organs above). Crabtree (1996; 2010) highlights that the changes in rural production relate to a more general increase in social complexity through the 7th and 8th centuries. This was certainly a period of marked change in the countryside. The emergence of estate centres saw what we might term a stratification of rural land, leading to economic intensification and specialisation, accompanied by demands for food rents and the growth of a market for resources (Hamerow 2004, 143–55). This intensification began before the development of the wics, but was not solely behind their emergence. Loveluck (2013, 168) highlights the importance of episcopal centres in re-occupied Roman centres emerging as centres for regional trade and administration in north-western Europe. These were effectively estate centres and part of a rural world, even if we might identify them as having certain urban characteristics (Loveluck 2013, 173). These gatherings of merchants created opportunities for exchange, and we can see the development of a virtual capacity for the emergence of specialised trading places from which landowners and merchants alike could profit.

We can see here the development of a diagram for the assemblage of the early medieval economy, in which performances of animal and crop husbandry, political and religious activity and long distance trade created the capacity for the emergence of specialised centres, not in a directly linear manner but through processes of coming together. Agency, or causality, emerged out of performances, the diagram of the urban being shaped around that formed by other constitutive processes (see Harris 2017a, 135); the urban emerged as a capacity of the rural and was never separate from it. We can see a distribution of economic processes between producers, craftspeople and merchants; flows of resources which became mineralised (DeLanda 1997, 26) as the wic but which overflowed its spatiality. The presence of wics intensified these flows, by increasing the capacity for trade and income generation. Hodges (2012, 90) demonstrates, for example, how monasteries were both transformative of and transformed by this economy, as new materials effectively became stratified into monastic life (we may find some parallels here with Hodder's (2016) discussion of entanglement and material dependence). The emporia did not emerge as fully formed urban entities, but through their re-iteration a distinction between urban and rural gradually emerged. Importantly, it was not only into the 'local' hinterland that this impetus reached. Urban growth stimulated the development of pottery industries, for example at La Londe near Rouen (Hodges

1991), a major supplier of pottery to Hamwic. Here we can see again the distribution of the urban assemblage, deterritorialising into other local processes in distant places which, in turn, provide the molecular substance of the molar wic. This is in contrast to Ipswich, where a pottery industry developed with its products being distributed widely along the east coast of England (Blinkhorn 2012). Ipswich Ware is a major ware type in Lundenwic, perhaps analogous with the supply of La Londe pottery to Hamwic in that distant demand stimulated industrial developments and caused the performance of these two centres to deterritorialise into each other.

As we have already seen, the agency for urbanisation is likely to occur at the intersection between multiple scales of activity and between flows of material, both human and non-human. Long distance trade was not a unique development in the middle Saxon period. Exotic goods occur in Anglo-Saxon graves, demonstrating links with the Byzantine and Mediterranean worlds, as well as further afield (e.g. Hines and Bayliss 2013). Such goods include elephant ivory rings, imported pottery, cowrie shells and Byzantine hanging bowls. Christopher Loveluck (2013, 180) has proposed that the coastal zone did not experience the same stratification through the development of estate centres, with coastal communities being distinctive in terms of their freedom and access to imported goods and resources (see also Loveluck and Tys 2006; Jervis 2016b). It can be argued that the development of wics was an attempt to stratify this trade by funnelling it into one place (Loveluck 2013, 189). However, as research in the Hamwic region shows, coastal exchange networks persisted independently of the wic (Ulmschneider 2000). By fulfilling a funnelling role though, wics can be perceived of as intensifying the flow of imported goods, increasing both the quantity and range of goods available. By creating links between these entry points and inland estates, imported goods and resources were able to penetrate further inland, creating the capacity for people to engage with these items in different ways at a personal scale. Whereas access to the imported items found in earlier graves might be conceivably linked to access to aristocratic networks in the case of inland examples (although around the coast it is conceivable that they relate to other networks; see Jervis 2016b), we can observe the emergence of opportunities to engage with these goods in new ways.

Within Hamwic imported pottery, the majority of which is from northern France, is ubiquitous (Hodges 1981; Timby 1988; Brown 1997; Jervis 2011). I have suggested elsewhere (Jervis, 2011) that concentrations of unusual imports may relate to the presence of merchants from elsewhere, or at least with contacts to those areas, perhaps being personal possessions rather than trade goods. The concentration of imported pottery as a proportion of assemblages in wics far exceeds that at most other coastal sites. At Flixborough (Lincolnshire), a coastal estate centre, only 51 sherds of an assemblage of over 5,000 were continental products (Vince 2009), although these include a considerable number of Ipswich Ware sherds. These were probably traded to the site as containers for other commodities, rather than being exchanged as empty pots for sale (Blinkhorn 2009, 358). Imported pottery is not found in Hamwic's immediate surroundings, with the exception of Winchester, a royal centre linked administratively to the port (Hodges 1981, 37).

Small quantities have been recovered at Portchester, another coastal site (Cunliffe 1976), but it seems that the pottery stayed, on the whole, within the wic. A similar picture can be seen in London, with small quantities finding their way up the River Thames, for example to the royal centre at Old Windsor (Hodges 1981, 40). One anomaly is the site at Lake End Road, Dorney, where a small assemblage of imports was excavated (Blinkhorn 2002). No buildings were excavated, but the presence of over 70 pits and evidence of metalworking is suggestive of some settlement. There is no suggestion that this a site of any particular status, with the imports likely being present due to the proximity of the site to London. Indeed, small quantities are known from sites along the Thames Valley (Cowie and Blackmore 2008).

It is likely that the low value of pottery meant that it was not worth trading large quantities overland, but opportunities to exchange vessels did exist where sites were joined by river systems. We can see here how the presence of wics increased the intensity of flows of pottery and opened up new possibilities for people to come into contact with it. Certain actualised properties, colour, size and so forth, travelled with the vessels, but within it lay further capacities, for example to be woven into processes of identity formation and community building. Whereas in Hamwic it was part of an assemblage of other imported goods, such as glass and metalwork, and may be seen as being actualised in the emergence of a distinctly cosmopolitan community (see Harris 2014 for a discussion of more-than-human communities), at Dorney this capacity was not actualised as these relations did not form. Even so, the presence of the vessels reveals associative links between life here and in the wic, and, potentially, the emergence of shared systems of value. The presence of imported pottery at higher status sites likely relates more to the emergence of close links between the landowning classes (whose position, remember, was contingent on processes of stratification of the countryside) and merchants, with the vessels perhaps coming with other goods such as wine to monastic and estate centres. Whilst not an *a priori* symbol of identity, through its enrolment in these contexts we can see this pottery as having the capacity to stand for status and reinforce social distinction (see Jervis 2014).

We can see, then, that the assemblage of imported pottery from Anglo-Saxon England is extremely varied in the way that its capacities to act were actualised. Whilst its flow was intensified by the presence of wics, its social role was contingent upon other relationships; being an index rather than symbol of status or cosmopolitan identity (Knappett 2005, 91–5). Here we can see how the presence of wics created opportunities for difference and distinction to occur through the enfolding of scales of international trade and domestic practice, opening up spaces for new social performances to emerge.

We can add a further site to this discussion, that of Sandtun, a coastal site in Kent. Here, around half of the pottery assemblage by weight is non-local, the majority being from northern France and, unusually, including coarse shelly wares (Gardiner *et al* 2001). There are other similarities with wic sites, in the form of evidence of small scale craft activity. Sandtun was probably a seasonally occupied site associated

with fishing and was likely dependent upon food provisions from elsewhere. It is important to note the absence of a recognised wic site serving the Kent coast, which has a particularly long history of contact with northern France (see Jervis 2016b). Additionally, the site was a landing place associated with the important monastic centre at Lyminge, from which there is also a considerable assemblage of imported pottery (see Jervis 2016b). It is likely, therefore, that the situation in Kent was different to elsewhere (Gardiner 2001, 277). Perhaps in Sandtun we can see the persistence of coastal links, existing outside, or alongside, the wic networks. The presence of Ipswich Ware suggests some link to Lundenwic, or engagement in east coast trade, whilst the presence of coarse shelly wares is suggestive of direct contact with coastal communities in northern France. By existing under the patronage of the monastery at Lyminge, we can, perhaps, see the monastery seeking to stratify trade and direct it to a particular location, by taking control of existing meshwork relations in a less intensive way than we can see in the process of stratification of imported goods which occurs at the wic sites.

Sandtun is an interesting addition to the discussion as elements of its performance are similar to those of the wic sites, although at much lower intensity. Assemblages are historically contingent and a case can be made for wics emerging not as pre-determined settlement type but at the intersection of scales; as the stratification of rural resources was drawn into contact with the smoother social space of the coastal zone, allowing the emergence of a new type of site, through distributed performances undertaken at varying scales and at different locations. Kent is altogether different. It had a particularly long history of coastal trade with France and, in Canterbury, it had an episcopal seat which was developing some 'urban' characteristics (Lyle 2008, 51). A similar situation can be seen in the case of Hampshire, where Winchester fulfilled this role, but Kent had always had a more intense relationship with its neighbour across the channel, as seen, for example, in the presence of imported pottery in graves (Jervis 2016b), by virtue of its proximity and the length of its coastline, as well as political links (Vince 1994, 109), a link which can also be seen in the presence of Anglo-Saxon material culture on the north French coast (Soulat 2010; Soulat *et al* 2012). Alan Vince (1994) suggests that there were a number of smaller landing places in Kent which were under royal control. As such, we might see the urban functions of the wic sites as distributed between different places in more literal terms in Kent. Rather than funnelling goods into one place, the historical processes at play here led to a different kind of trading landscape developing, perhaps from an earlier impetus to stratify the flow of imported goods into the kingdom. This highlights how the wics were not a *fait accompli*, but specific instances of emergence (see also Hodges 2012, 114).

DeLanda (1997, 38–9) argues that towns consist of meshwork and hierarchical components. Following Loveluck (2013), we can suggest that as the inland areas were becoming increasingly hierarchical, the coastal zone retained meshwork characteristics. Following Vince (1994), we might argue that in Kent the numerous existing landing places may have been stratified into the performance of kingship, perhaps as a part of a wider process of stratification of the kingdom's countryside,

stimulated by similar factors to those seen elsewhere, but also the intensity of continental contact before the 7th century. Elsewhere we see a somewhat different picture emerging. Hamwic seems to have been a centre of some importance before the foundation of the wic, being suggested to be the site of a royal vill and a minster church (Morton 1992, 28–9). Early mid-Saxon graves point to the site being a focus of pre-wic activity (Morton 1992, 48; Hodges 2012, 104) and in the earliest phases the site can be seen to display meshwork characteristics, with the site becoming increasingly stratified as it developed. It was not a conceived whole, but, rather the street plan developed around existing structures and then served to shape its growth (Morton 1992, 38–40). The landscape is not divided into functional zones, as different crafts were undertaken next to each other. There is a clear degree of organisation in the maintenance of boundaries and metalled road surfaces, but little evidence of social distinction. In Hamwic we can perhaps see an example of what DeLanda (1997, 30) calls a “gateway community”, displaying a high proportion of meshwork characteristics; heterogeneity, adaptive growth and little evidence of social hierarchy, but enough bureaucracy, perhaps coming from a mixture of mercantile self-rule and royal authority, to allow the place to develop and retain its distinctiveness.

To return to Naylor’s (2016) discussion of hinterlands, I would argue that whilst this is a useful way of thinking about the variegated relations between town and country, it is more productive to think about how urban and rural processes bled into each other and how their performance defined them in relation to each other than to seek to privilege one over the other as a ‘prime mover’ in economic development. Wics grew out of historical processes and also acted upon them, whilst these processes were not uniform. We can see distinction not arising at any particular scale; wics were not designed from the top down or conceived of from the bottom up, they were not distinctive in any way that was prior to action. Their urban character is not essential to their being, but is the result of the emergence and actualisation of particular capacities through interactions across scales, from the management of agricultural stock, the production of goods in distant places or household interactions with pottery. By thinking through assemblages we do not accord significance to any one scale over the other, or pre-suppose the existence of any particular form of agency. Rather, we identify how the town emerges as a bricolage of relations between scales. Changes at the molecular scale gradually build to the ‘phase transitions’ perceptible at the molar scale – the increasing distinction between urban and rural for example. Critically, this approach also forces us to place to one side any notion of an evolutionary development, which characterised earlier work (Hodges 1982), just as we cannot see evolution in other areas of the economy, for example from gift to commodity exchange (Moreland 2000).

The example discussed here is part of a process which is considerably larger than the coast of England and northern France. Whilst our analysis has been framed by a focus on Hamwic and other analogous sites, it has necessarily overflowed this frame, to follow the flows of goods, power and resources which were mineralised as the wic settlement. By following these flows we are inevitably drawn into other

processes, the emergence of wic sites on the continent (Cowie and Hill 2001), of urbanisation in Scandinavia (Sindbæk 2007), developments in the Mediterranean and the Arab World (McCormick 2001; Wickham 2005) or the coast of east Africa (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). Following flows and mapping assemblages does more than create dots on maps which represent a trading network. They pull us between scales, folding local processes – the minting of a coin in Arabia or the fashioning of a pot in Ipswich – into other performances, of exchange or identity formation, at the household, settlement wide or regional scale.

We can think, for example, about the itinerary (see Chapter 3) of an Islamic coin found in a pit in Hamwic (Brown 1988). Minted in the Arabian peninsula, as an assemblage of silver, a dye, a monier, a regulatory framework and so forth, it was instigated into a network of trade stretching from the Gulf to the English Channel, potentially passing through numerous hands, its capacity to embody monetary worth being actualised in every exchange. Each exchange was a multi-scalar process, pulling together goods or resources, themselves heterogeneous assemblages, into assemblages of commerce formed of multiple similar interactions. Finally the coin was lost in a pit, presumably by accident, a local action of little wider consequence. By focussing on assemblages and relations we realise that action does not take place at a single scale but occurs across and between them. Given an increasing trend towards examinations of the ‘global’ Middle Ages (e.g. Davies 2011; Heng 2013; Campbell 2016; Purcell 2016; Moore 2016; Belich 2016; Jervis 2018), assemblage approaches have great potential in allowing us to explore the molecular processes which work across the local scales that have previously framed research, not just to trace how the medieval world was connected, but to map how these connections were transformative. They allow us to work not towards recreating a medieval world but towards revealing insights into medieval worlds which are not beholden to linear time and reified generalities such as ‘economy’, ‘society’, ‘politics’ or ‘religion’. Assemblage approaches instead appreciate the importance of open ended processes of becoming which are built on specific pasts and lead to multiple potential futures (see Jervis 2018 for further consideration of this).

I propose, therefore, that assemblage approaches will offer a productive ground for exploring the implications of action in the Middle Ages. Whilst our analysis will always be framed within a specific space-time, be that the analysis of a region or a site, an assemblage approach permits us to explore its wider contingency, the ways that the relations we identify resonate outwards and the ways in which externalities are implicated into specific performances. These strengths are, of course, not limited to medieval archaeology but are equally applicable for addressing issues of scale in other periods (e.g. Harris 2017a).

Summary: The value of assemblage urbanism

This chapter has drawn on influences from contemporary urban geography and DeLanda’s writing to outline some new directions in the archaeology of urban places. An assemblage approach fundamentally de-centres our definitions of what

urban places are, both in their own terms (existing in multiple forms within a single reality) and in relation to their regions. It achieves this by rejecting the ideas that towns are simply the actualisation of an idea of urbanism and that they are somehow static entities which appear and disappear, by highlighting urbanism as an ongoing, deterritorialised process. The discussions of early medieval wics and urbanism in Mesopotamia emphasise the ways in which urban places emerge out of coded flows and serve themselves to code flows, having implications which leak beyond their boundaries. The urban landscape is, itself, formed of vibrant matter, causing places to emerge in their own terms, but also in ways which are subject to circulating ideas of urbanism. As archaeologists, we reveal urbanism through our reading of archaeological data, we create iterations of urbanism rather than simply reconstructing it. We also mobilise these ideas as they circulate in archaeological literature. Assemblage approaches force us to pause, to think about the terms in which we are writing urban archaeology, to question assumptions and acknowledge vibrancy. As such, they create the potential for us to move from approaches which homogenise urban experiences towards what Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 6) would term a “schizoanalysis”, which reveals the urban as multiple and different, “that there are no straight lines, neither in words nor things, and many means of becoming-city” (Frichot *et al* 2016b, 6).

Note

- 1 However, for Deleuze and Guattari the state is what is actualised through performance, which existed as a virtual capacity of what came before (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 217).

5

DOING ASSEMBLAGE ARCHAEOLOGY

Assembling archaeological knowledge

In this chapter I aim to make the case that archaeological methods are not neutral or simple technical processes, but are productive and affective assemblages through which archaeological knowledge is formed and transformed. In making this point it will be necessary to reflect both on the nature of archaeological practice and also of archaeological knowledge. Such introspection about the nature of knowledge and, by extension, the implications of archaeological methods for interpretation, are not new – indeed it can be seen to accompany every theoretical ‘turn’ within archaeology (e.g. Schiffer 1976; 1987; Shanks and Tilley 1992; Hodder and Hudson 2003). Assemblage thought is no different in this regard, with a number of scholars examining the archaeological process as a process of assemblage (Lucas 2012a; Edgeworth 2012), in particular drawing on the Science and Technology Studies (STS) inspired writing of Bruno Latour, as well as from Deleuze and Guattari. Here I wish to combine this work with that of scholars who have brought the writing of Deleuze to bear on research methods across the social sciences, in particular that of John Law (2004), who combines Deleuzian ideas with the findings of STS research to make radical suggestions about the relationship between research and the ‘reality’ that we seek to explain (see DeLanda and Harman 2017 for a discussion of concepts of reality). From the outset, this final chapter is broader in its influences, being wary of the differences between STS/Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and assemblage approaches (see Chapters 1 and 2), whilst finding inspiration in the intersections between them.

It is with the concept of reality that we can begin. For Bjornar Olsen *et al* (2012, 5) archaeology is a ‘craft’ rather than an ‘art’, a process through which knowledge is formed through iterative relations with things. Through their adoption of a symmetrical approach, they are able to perceive of archaeology as formed of relations between the archaeologist, instruments, data, artefacts and sites and other

participants through which the past is not ‘found’ but rearticulated (Olsen *et al* 2012, 79). This finds a close parallel with Law’s more general points regarding processes of research. Law (2004, 2) argues that simple description is inadequate for describing complex phenomena and, therefore, that we miss things which do not sit within our mechanisms for purifying phenomena through data capture and reporting. In particular he proposes that as the world is continuously in a process of “generative flux” (Law 2004, 7) that reality is not a single reality ‘out there’ to be found, but constantly emerges as multiple, connected, *realities* continually being formed through practice, including that of research. This is a position which Manuel DeLanda and Graham Harman (2017) disagree with; whilst agreeing that reality is not ‘out there’, they propose that a single reality is unfolding, albeit one in which there is space for multiplicity (either multiple objects in the case of Harman or multiple possibilities in the case of DeLanda; see particularly DeLanda and Harman 2017 40–42, 71). Harman (DeLanda and Harman 2017, 40) states that art is not exhausted by any human interpretation of it, and a similar perspective can be used to think about the past – the past is never exhausted. We have already seen in Chapter 2 how within assemblage thought we might not perceive distinct multiple realities but a reality which is multiple in and of itself (Buchanan 2015, 386), and by understanding the ways in which these realities overlap we can perhaps perceive Law’s concept of multiple realities in a similar way. We could phrase this in terms of molar and molecular phenomena: research setting out to understand a reality ‘out there’ is focussed on a molar concept of, in our case, ‘the past’, whilst research in fact forms and reveals the complex molecular relations of which such a concept is formed through the study of the past in the present, which may, over time, cause the single molar reality to break down.

Law (2004, 24) summarises the characteristics of a molar reality ‘out there’ as being:

- Independent of researchers, with research being a more or less neutral intervention into this reality.
- As preceding research, again suggesting that the researcher is effectively neutral.
- As composed of definite forms, rather than being complex, messy and often contradictory.
- As being singular, or the same everywhere, and therefore failing to account for the alternative ontological realities introduced in Chapter 1.
- Constant and unchanging.

We cannot deny that this molar reality exists, but it is critical that we accept that it is one articulation of reality. This molar reality might be seen as over-coding perception, masking the multiplicity that comes from a focus on the molecular processes of which it is constituted. Law (2004) goes on to explain, that research is a productive process, one which makes multiple objects and multiple realities, some of which neatly sit together whilst others have messier and more complex relations. These ideas translate nicely into archaeological research. If we view

archaeological method as entirely objective we can perceive of it as setting out to identify a past reality which is 'out there'. The prehistoric house that we excavate always was and always will be a prehistoric house, which relates to a prehistoric settlement and a prehistoric agricultural landscape. Wherever this house is encountered by researchers, whether in the field or as it circulates in a technical report it will always be a prehistoric house. But such an approach is inherently problematic. The prehistoric house becomes known as such because it is defined in this way by researchers through a process of engagement with the remains which demand some form of interpretation. Prehistoric people certainly did not identify themselves as 'prehistoric' and in determining the structure as a 'house' certain concepts of domesticity are introduced to interpretation which might have little relation to the ways in which that house was encountered in the past. Furthermore, the house may encountered and understood differently by researchers from different research traditions, and the structure, whilst being a prehistoric house, is also perhaps an object of research, an aid for training students excavating on the site and an archaeological 'type'. Yet the house, as a set of traces of past activity exists, whether researchers intervene or not; the researchers do not make the house but do bring it into being in new ways. Through this simple example we can already begin to see how there might not be a single reality 'out there' but rather multiple, related, realities emerging through the process of research.

If we follow Olsen *et al* (2012) in seeing archaeology as a craft we can perceive it, and research in general, as a process of making, not a working *on* material but a working *with* matter (Hickey-Moody 2015, 170). Our research findings are wholly the product of our relations with matter, we are not simply describing it but engaging with its material properties and negotiating material relationships in building ideas about the past. Such an approach to archaeological work is developed by Matthew Edgeworth (2012), who stresses the way that archaeological excavation is a process of material engagement, in which past behaviour guides bodily movements, making it a process of material unfolding. Firstly training, or craft skill, is brought to bear on material engagement, coding the ways in which archaeological deposits might be encountered. However the deposits themselves also make demands; as the archaeologist 'follows the cut' the encounter has the potential to surprise or re-structure knowledge (Edgeworth 2012, 77), both to change the excavator's perception of the archaeological record but also to modify their practice. In this way excavation is not an uncovering of the past or a 'reading' of the archaeological record, but a process of intervention and dialogue, one through which archaeological knowledge is not revealed, but produced. We might see archaeological practice as a machine, in which flows of matter from the past are drawn into relations with knowledge and materials from elsewhere; the "archaeology machine", to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 23) attaches itself to the Body without Organs that is the flow of past matter, breaking the flow of matter from the past and making it matter in the present. Critically this flow of past matter includes that from non-anthropogenic processes, what we might term 'natural'. This is a key point of contention in Edgeworth's writing, explored through

the description of an encounter with a flint point. Edgeworth explains how the excavator thought that they had reached a natural deposit, but in removing an annoyingly sharp stone, characterised as an engagement with raw materiality, it became apparent that the feature was, in fact archaeological. Yet, this stone could only be identified as being 'archaeological' because through the process of excavation it was brought into an assemblage of archaeological research, what Law (2004) terms a 'method assemblage'. We can critique the concept of engagement with the 'raw materiality' of the stone (Lucas 2012b; Beggren 2012), as whilst it was the materiality of the object (its sharpness) which drew the excavator's attention, its significance was reliant on more than a material encounter; a structure of circulating knowledge made the excavator aware of the significance of this artefact. If we did not know that stone tools existed then this would, for the archaeologist, have been just another stone and archaeological knowledge would have emerged in a different way. This demonstrates well how we do not simply find a past but construct one through dialogue between past and present, as knowledge circulates and is brought to bear on material encounter; as we come to recognise a pot sherd as medieval or a piece of bone as worked, with implications for how the intervention into the material proceeds.

Law (2004, 45) therefore proposes that methods are not a means of discovering or depicting realities, but participate in their emergence. This is an approach which is problematic in that it denies the implications of the molar reality introduced at the start of this section: whilst our methods produce lines of flight from that reality, they are always constrained by our experience, our reality and our ontological position. As such we can perceive of methods as a form of productive assemblage, or gathering, which, critically, has the characteristics of an assemblage – coding and territoriality, which constrain the ways in which realities might emerge. Such an approach is not new within archaeology, Gavin Lucas (2012a, 234) describes fieldwork as a process of disaggregation and assemblage, as things are taken from the ground and become something else, becoming entangled with archaeological knowledge and with other archival objects such as context sheets, in relation to which they are defined and understood. A similar perspective is provided by Olsen *et al* (2012, 109) who see archaeological recording as a means of translating material memories into different media. This is an idea which can be seen to persist throughout the archaeological process as artefacts are separated, classified and transformed into objects of knowledge, becoming re-assembled in the production of synthesis (Olsen *et al* 2012, 111).

If we return to the ideas of the molar and the molecular then we can begin to see the ways in which methods and frameworks can be perceived of as coding structures. Dominant systems, be they of methodological process or interpretive frameworks, determine the conditions of possibilities. By becoming molar entities they restrain practice, effectively managing and purifying relations with a vibrant material world which has the potential to blow these systems up by resisting methods (think of the pot that denies classification) or disrupting frameworks (think of Edgeworth's sharp stone and the way it challenged the distinction between

natural and cultural) (Renold and Mellor 2013, 26–8). By focussing on methods as assemblages we can take a different perspective, in which the performance of methods, the engagement with the material described by Edgeworth, becomes the molecular. Archaeological sites, artefacts and data are, therefore, simultaneously molar and molecular. Data can be molar; taking a purified form – an assemblage of pottery sorted into neat typological groups or a site broken down neatly into phases – but can also be molecular, the experience of feeling the pottery or following the cut, the practice of making knowledge. Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2013, 114) proposes that data can be seen as a machine in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, something which if 'plugged in' to other things might be productive in the creation of different realities. Data do not, therefore speak for themselves – if allowed to be molecular then they can de-stabilise molar forms and generate new understanding of the past, whilst becoming something different themselves. Such ideas can also be applied to the way that 'given' knowledge circulates in archaeological literature (see Lucas 2012a, 244–57). It may be used as reality, as a stable molar entity, but may be plugged in elsewhere, becoming molecular and de-stabilising knowledge structures, creating realities which more or less overlap with other realities, emerging out of other method assemblages. Whilst we can perceive knowledge as circulating, therefore, we can also think about the ways in which research methods cause ruptures in knowledge structures (Hickey-Moody 2015, 187–8), knowledge does not circulate in a passive way, but rather is a component of and is transformed by enrolment in method assemblages. For DeLanda (DeLanda and Harman 2017, 145) knowledge is better thought of as a set of cognitive tools, a means of experimenting and improving, back tracking and contradicting, rather than something accumulated along a teleological path to a final 'truth'. Eventually these transformations may intensify to the extent that a phase transition, a shift in knowledge and reality as perceived in the molar sense, is brought about. This has implications for how we codify archaeological data. Coding, in the sense of sorting data into types or categories, is a way of seeking to reveal patterns in data, but also is a process through which the researcher colonises the past, by imposing categories which relate to the stories that we wish to tell (Maclure 2013 167–8; see also Van Oyen 2013). Whilst these categories bear some correlation to the material, the material is muted by method; coding is a means of preventing diversity and disruption from emerging, of resisting the unformed flow of the material. Such structures imply a fixed logic, a reality out there, which may poorly handle phenomena which exceed these forms – the sherd which cannot be classified or the ambiguous cut feature. As Vesa Pekka Herva *et al* (2004) demonstrate, classification privileges form over process, creating a flimsy basis for understanding what actually happened in the past. Whilst purified, molar data is compatible with a simple narrative, a given reality 'out there', the knowable is privileged over the marginal, averaging the subject matter rather than allowing the data to be molecular, to be transformative, to create messier realities. As Chris Fowler (2017) demonstrates, typological work translates some qualities of things but neglects others, producing a pattern of homogeneity but neglecting heterogeneity. If we follow Deleuze then homogeneity must

be explained so the development of methods sensitive to difference allows us to shift our perspective from expecting homogeneity to expecting heterogeneity. A method assemblage is, therefore, constituted of relations between the molecular and the molar. Depending upon the questions being asked we choose to amplify some complexities whilst also producing simplifications (Law 2004, 107; Fowler 2017, 98), which inevitably shape the realities which might emerge out of research. By following Deleuze and Guattari (1972) we can anticipate difference through developing methods of schizoanalysis, in which we allow archaeological objects, be they artefacts, sites or features, to be multiple, partial and impure, and we move from a focus on representation to production.

Inscription and textualisation are critical components of the method assemblage. They are the means by which phenomena are captured and communicated (Law 2004, 30). This is also the case in archaeology, where excavated features are recorded onto context sheets and artefacts into databases (Figure 5.1). As Thomas Yarrow (2008) demonstrates, such methods of inscription are problematic, forming a representation, translating material properties into something textual. The extent to which recording strategies impact how archaeologists go about their work is debated and, in reality, highly variable. For some the sheet is completed at the end of the process as record, for others it is a more dynamic process, which serves to guide and structure engagements with the material record (see for example Cobb *et al.* 2012 on the tensions between subjectivity and objectivity in archaeological fieldwork). Inevitably this is a process of purifying the record, and further purification occurs as context sheets are further translated into a singular site narrative. Yet, whilst being a molar entity, it is also molecular; it might be plugged into other method assemblages and allowed to shape knowledge in other ways, effectively standing in for the material, being to a certain extent ontologically indistinct from the material archaeology itself as the only trace left of its being. In studying depositional practices, for example, we may engage with context records rather than generalising narratives, and by plugging them into the method assemblage of zooarchaeological analysis create new realities which are at odds with conventional understandings of waste deposition and which add texture to generalising terms such as 'ritual activity' (e.g. Morris 2011; see also discussion of structured deposition in Chapter 2). Given that textualisation can never be objective, but rather is a documentation of observation and experience, we can see these texts not as documenting a reality but as mediating realities. Rather than making statements about reality they are making realities (Law 2004, 31); not denying the material existence of the pit but allowing it to itinerate beyond its material form, in a similar way to the textual objects discussed in Chapter 3 – seeing the pit not as having an essence but rather as being an ongoing accretion of processes which expand beyond its material form.

Research is therefore not a process of identifying the reality out there, but of constructing multiple realities which come to be affective upon each other. Research is a process undertaken by people, intervening with the material, but the material is not a blank canvas onto which knowledge is inscribed, the material acts

SITE		AREA		CONTEXT
DEPOSIT	CUT	MASONRY		
Geology	Shape in plan	Form	MATRIX	
Colour	Profile	Materials		
Texture	Dimensions	Treatment		
Inclusions	Filled by	Orientation		
Fill of	Cuts	Butted by		
Cut of		Butts		
METHOD	CONDITIONS			
DESCRIPTION				LENGTH
				WIDTH
				DEPTH
				PLANS
				SECTIONS
				PHOTOGRAPHS
SKETCH PLAN/SECTION				
INTERPRETATION				
SAMPLES				SMALL FINDS
PHASING				
EXCAVATOR		RECORDER	DATE	CHECKED

FIGURE 5.1 Example of an archaeological context sheet. Image: Ben Jervis.

on the pasts that can emerge, constraining the potential of some realities, drawing us to focus on some realities and averting our gaze from others. We find ourselves not asking what objects or features mean, but where they take us (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005, 96) and we do not come to objects afresh, but in a way which is “overcrowded with habit, opinion and cliché, or by dominant modes of representational thinking” (Frichot and Metzger 2016, 79; after Deleuze 2003, 81). This has important implications for thinking about the relationship between method and practice. We might summarise the process of archaeological interpretation as a process of gathering data and then interpreting it through some theoretical, or conceptual, lens. A key aim of Deleuze’s writing is to break down this boundary between theory and practice, to see theory as an “inquiry into say, a practice” (Deleuze 1968, 36; see also Coleman and Ringrose 2013, 2). From such a position the archaeological record is not a representation of concepts; concepts are not ‘of’ the object but rather are indistinguishable from the object. In other words, concept and artefact come together to create an object (Coleman and Ringrose 2013, 8). Things are therefore not a reflection of ideas, but are indivisible from them (Taylor 2013). What this means in practice is that the idea of a split between method and theory is a fallacy, brought about through engagement in practice at the molar scale, of purifying method and interpretation in which we are bound to ideas of singular, independent realities which conceal the ways in which realities are formed by method assemblages; a surrender to the fact that the role of science is not to describe objective reality but to build understanding through engaging in the messiness of the world (Law 2004, 36).

The method assemblage is territorialising, being a gathering of different components, but, like any assemblage, is necessarily deterritorialised as well. Law (2004) terms this set of external relations as those between the method assemblage and its ‘hinterland’; for example exploring how academic papers deterritorialise the methods used in one laboratory into the practices of another (Law 2004, 29). Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose (2013, 2) stress that Deleuze’s work emphasises the fertility of applying ways of thinking and doing from one discipline in another, effectively expanding the hinterland of practice to include links to a range of other method assemblages. This is, of course, a familiar idea for archaeologists who both methodologically (e.g. computer applications, geological analysis) and theoretically (e.g. applications of social theory) draw elements of other method assemblages into their practice. Certainly archaeological work is territorialising, but in being so is necessarily defined by relations of exteriority (DeLanda, 2006, 10). As Olsen *et al* (2012, 38) argue, archaeological interpretation is not only the product of human thought, but of the coming together of archaeological things, instruments, ideas and methods drawn from a range of other domains. We can think, for example, of the fundamental concept of stratigraphy; not an archaeological concept but a geological one, territorialised into the practice of archaeological knowledge generation. Similarly surveying tools and methods, methods for the chemical characterisation of artefacts and computer applications are all imported from other domains, territorialised into the archaeological assemblage and stratified into the

archaeological method, which in turn serves to code engagements with the past. However, through this moment of territorialisation, practice is necessarily deterritorialised; the archaeological assemblage is productive – it produces pasts, but also creates the potential through new applications of ideas and methods for developments which leak beyond archaeology. In his discussion of the archaeological process as one of engagement with vibrant materiality, Edgeworth laments the way in which archaeologists import theoretical concepts from outside of the discipline (commonly from French philosophers) and seek to situate archaeological evidence within these theoretical frameworks, leading to a string of schools of archaeological thought which are led not by engagement with archaeological evidence but by the ideas of “armchair philosophers” (Edgeworth, 2012). What Edgeworth is taking issue with here, I think, is the application of theory in a molar sense, as one of those dominant systems that determine the conditions of possibility discussed by Emma Renold and David Mellor (2013, 26–8). The issue is not that theory is being used, but rather that it is not being used in a molecular way. It is not used to transform archaeological knowledge, nor does it allow the archaeological method assemblage to act in a transformative way on these concepts and ideas, something which can only be achieved by starting from the archaeological material rather than the theoretical concept. This is an important distinction; certainly it is not problematic that external ideas become incorporated into the archaeological assemblage, provided that through this incorporation these ideas are both generative and are able to be transformed themselves. If we perceive of concepts not as separate but as making objects as wholes, as discussed above, the ideas, as much as the material to which they are applied, may be enacted in different ways, developing alternative, but over-flowing and connected realities.

This deterritorialisation is not only limited to methods and ideas, but the very frameworks in which knowledge is created. Fieldwork projects are not isolated endeavours; they emerge in ways which can be seen as shaped, or coded, by heritage legislation, research agendas, the individual interests of researchers and best practice guidelines for example (Olsen *et al* 2012, 71; Lucas 2012a, 244–9). Certain ideas circulate in the engagements with the past whilst other frameworks constrain the potential for archaeological interventions to occur in the first place. Dan Hicks (2016, 10) highlights how management policies have implications for how we encounter archaeological sites, suggesting, for example, that it is non-interventionist management regimes which created the space for phenomenological interpretations of prehistoric monuments, which might not have been possible had sites not persisted as entities within the landscape. What I am suggesting, therefore, is that the archaeological assemblage is a particular arrangement of flows; of knowledge, ideas, things and methods. Some are drawn from past iterations of archaeological practice, but others drawn from outside. Archaeology is not a discrete bounded thing, but a particular territorialising and coding process of knowledge creation, in which certain ways of doing become stratified and thus code this process, but is also deterritorialised, being shaped and shaping that which is beyond its limits.

We might think of the archaeological method assemblage as the process of converting the desire to understand the past into affective knowledge; knowledge which is powerful in the way that it circulates and codes our understanding of the past in future research (Fowler 2013, 64). The archaeological assemblage is, therefore, constructed between the past and the present (Lucas 2012a, 196), it is way of working between these temporal domains. Rodney Harrison (2015, 154) argues that it is productive to use the concept of assemblage to move away from the conventional metaphor of excavation within archaeology to, instead, use one of surface. To understand the past we can only see what is at the surface, that which is revealed to us. Furthermore, if we perceive of the surface as an assemblage it becomes a heterogeneous mixture of things drawn from the past and present, entangled in an imminent unfolding of the present, across which agency is distributed; in other words we can move from the simple contention that our understanding of the past is always the product of the present, to see pasts as emerging out of the relationship between past and present (see also Olsen *et al* 2012). A similar idea is introduced by Edgeworth (2016, 106) who characterises archaeology as a “hyper object”, as the totality of anthropogenic activity into which archaeology intervenes into a wider totality, the archaeosphere, a more-than-human mixture, a vibrant and living thing. Therefore, different interventions lead to the emergence of different realities, to different processes of surfacing.

This is where we can see the potential for multiple, but overlapping, realities to emerge in different locations. Law (2004) draws on the work of Annemarie Mol on the understanding of illnesses to demonstrate this point, but we can use a simple archaeological example to demonstrate the same point. Let's take as a starting point the maiolica vessel that we were introduced to in Chapter 2. Through the method assemblage of ceramic analysis the vessel is ‘coded’ into a system, identified as a type of vessel called a maiolica jug, the pottery fabric situated within the type series of pottery from Southampton (this type series of course interacting with other type series elsewhere). But, through being drawn into a relationship with historical evidence and other finds it becomes something else, a possession of Robert Machado's household. Through its relations with scientific apparatus it becomes a scientific object, a set of mineralogical data, the analysis of which draws it into a wider method assemblage in which its provenance can be elucidated. Of course, all of these are the same pot, but at the same time they are different pots, with elements of its multiple reality being more or less apparent between these sites. Furthermore, it is able to be translated between sites, as scientific data or an entry into a pottery catalogue for example and the elements which are brought to the surface carry more or less weight as they enter into other method assemblages directed at addressing particular questions about the past. We see, therefore, that different elements of the reality of the vessel are brought to the surface, we notice different things; through the enrolment of this vessel in different method assemblages it goes on to be productive in different ways, informing us about trading links, domestic practices in Machado's house or ceramic technology, for example. Because surfaces are continuous unfoldings we can see that each of these realities

stimulates different lines of flight, a process within which the priorities of the researcher have an important shaping role. They deterritorialise the pot in different ways, amplifying certain relations and muting others, with some realities coming to be mutually exclusive in space, but others over-flowing, circulating as black-boxed ideas which are brought to bear elsewhere. Out pot is at once one thing and many things, it is fractional.

This discussion has explored the ways in which theory and method relate to one another, not as distinct concepts but rather as two parts of a whole. As such, it is important to think about this relationship as method is not an objective reconstructing of a singular past, a purely neutral or technical set of processes, but rather a productive process of assemblage through which multiple pasts emerge. Our methods are coding structures which limit the potential for different pasts to emerge, a simple example being the material dumped on a spoil heap which is removed from the archaeological assemblage, with potential inevitably lost as small artefacts or environmental remains are absent. In other words, the spaces (in the more than physical sense) of practice define our research. If we are alive to alternative possibilities, to the potential of multiple realities, we can seek to extend these spaces, a process which can be controversial. This is most obvious in the productive field of contemporary archaeology where the value of developments such as the van project (the excavation of a transit van; see Bailey *et al* 2009), which apply archaeological methods to understanding contemporary objects, are questioned from the perspective of a molar conceptualisation of archaeology, rather than becoming molecular interactions which might gradually break down and over-code archaeological practice. Indeed, methods more generally are not blindly applied in objective ways, but are continuously developed, improved and improvised. These molecular complexities are however often not acknowledged in method statements, which justify methods in molar terms, for example through reference to respected textbooks and sets of professional standards, instead of representing, reflecting upon and considering the implications of the messy (literally!) realities of archaeological research.

In closing this section it is worth reflecting upon some of the ways in which this over-coding might come about. If we view archaeology as craft, it becomes a skilled endeavour, in which training and education code flows of knowledge creation. As Hannah Cobb and Karina Croucher (2014) demonstrate, in a British university context at least, we can observe molarity and singularity emerging; teaching is being increasingly separated from the practice of research with larger agendas being set by those who reproduce normative ideas, or the dominant systems, of knowledge creation and dissemination. Cobb and Croucher use assemblage thought as a means of exploring the productive relationships between pedagogy and research, particularly the ways that students are not simply passive receivers of knowledge but producers of it, most noticeably through their participation in fieldwork projects. They discuss their experience on fieldwork projects where students were encouraged to reflect on the archaeological process and contribute to knowledge creation. Effectively they were acknowledging the molecular role

of archaeological methods and, at times, allowing convention to be questioned, broken down, reshaped or over-coded, whilst also equipping students with skills (and surfacing existing skills) which had implications for the 'lines of flight' that those students took in their future research. The student, as Cobb and Croucher (2014, 209) argue is themselves an assemblage, a body multiple, assembled across different times and spaces and a component of a productive method assemblage. As Law (2004) stresses in more general terms, the result of such reflection is not to disregard method, but to reflect upon it, to think about what is being missed and to acknowledge its productivity, which, as Cobb and Croucher clearly demonstrate, is not restricted to research methods, but also the ways in which knowledge and skills are developed and passed on. Reflection on method therefore allows us to be more self-aware, to understand the externalities at play in the method assemblage, to explore the implications of accepted ways of doing and knowing and to be alive to the ways that such dominant, molar, practices code knowledge creation and restrict possibilities. This all comes back to archaeology being a process of intervention with the material, not of recovering a past, but getting to know it through drawing remnants from it to the surface and enrolling them in generative method assemblages.

Assembling heritage

Once we are alive to the potential for multiple realities we can go on to explore the implications of this beyond archaeological practice, by thinking more generally about wider engagement in the past through heritage practice. Every place, building or monument has a past, which we might perceive of as a virtual capacity to be actualised as 'heritage'. Heritage, in turn, can be thought of as a process of revealing, celebrating or legitimising a particular version of the past. As a transformative process, it is fruitful to think of heritage as a transformative, or machinic, assemblage – it “is both an actuality and a potential to become” (Hillier 2016, 139). What is actualised through this process of assemblage is a desire for a particular past to be actualised and, in doing so, we can perceive of heritage as affective – as having implications for how the past is brought to bear on the present, both in terms of the narratives which are brought to prominence and the ways in which a place or monument might develop in the future. Therefore, heritage is not simply a process of remembering the past but a set of practices which enact new realities and different futures (Harrison 2016, 171).

Like any assemblage, the heritage assemblage can be perceived of as a mixture of stratified, hierarchical elements and rhizomatic or meshwork components. Recent research has revealed that the balance between these elements can have implications, in terms of the types of heritage which are actualised but also the ways in which the tools that are put in place to protect these notions of heritage are able to be used. For example, Bjornar Olsen and Þóra Pétursdóttir (2016) discuss how attending to materials creates possibilities for alternative, messier, heritage practices in which modern waste and ruins are allowed to penetrate this practice,

revealing troubling pasts that fall outside of the accepted realms of heritage practice by revealing the legacies of “unruly things”. Heritage practices are a process of stratification, sorting and cementing flows in the materialisation of a particular past, but attending to the material causes these practices to be de-stratified as we become alive to the potential of different forms of past making and their implications for life in the present. Discussing the Women’s VD clinic in Melbourne, Jean Hillier (2016, 129) discusses how the clinic has a “thing power”, an “infinite capacity to create encounters, relations and new planes of organisation”; monuments for Deleuze and Guattari (1994, 167) are “a bloc of present sensations”, in which past, present and future are enfolded. Encounters with the clinic as monument stimulate multiple lines of flight, which permit reflection on issues surrounding inequality, prostitution and sexual exploitation in the past and the present, not to present a past grounded in ideas of morality but to activate the past in ways which are brought to bear on processes in the present (Hillier 2016, 131). Following Hillier (2016, 132), the hierarchical elements of heritage assemblages, which might include heritage legislation, guidance issued by heritage bodies and the bodies themselves, are concrete machines, which produce a single version of a thing. Yet the heritage objects – the building of the clinic as a monument, associated historical sources and past bodies (both human and bacterial) – are anarchic, not resisting this formalised past as much as making it otherwise, surfacing other processes; they are the rhizomatic elements (those unruly things discussed by Olsen and Pétursdóttir). Hierarchical heritage practices can be seen as a way of homogenising or territorialising things into a particular form of heritage, what might be termed ‘official heritage’ or the ‘authorised heritage discourse’. Rhizomatic components, on the other hand, may lead to the actualisation of more specific and contextual narratives, potentially leading to the emergence of alternative forms of power over the past which might de-stabilise these official narratives and allow us to “acknowledge and value the things called heritage as the things that they are” (Pétursdóttir 2013, 49).

The ways in which formal heritage discourse is undertaken are historically contingent, re-emerging through engagement with ideas circulating in literature, training and professional practice which can be traced back to preservation movements of the 19th century (Pendlebury 2013, 710). This circulation becomes a way in which attitudes and knowledge become stratified which leads to ‘heritage’ being defined as an object of knowledge rather than a process in itself. Heritage practices are not stable however. Heritage always leaks into other domains of life, most typically in the context of the planning system into domains of political and economic power. Through an analysis of conservation heritage practice and policy in England, John Pendlebury (2013) shows how circulating knowledge and ideas code ‘authorised’ heritage discourse, but that this coding may be broken down and over-coded through productive friction between heritage and other domains. This can be seen, for example, in the move towards ideas of a set of ‘heritage values’ and a concept of ‘constructive conservation’¹ which seeks to manage change to the historic environment by finding ways in which heritage does not impede what is perceived as economic or social progress. By seeing conservation as management

of change it is evaluated through its relations with these other domains (Pendlebury 2013, 719). This attitude to heritage might be seen as arising out of these relations of exteriority, as political perceptions of heritage are vital to the funding for heritage bodies and their ongoing work.

These heritage practices create a specific form of heritage discourse and might be seen as reifying asymmetric power structures (Harrison 2013b, 591), where the past is brought to bear on the present and future by a heritage 'elite'. Their approaches are determined to varying degrees by relations of exteriority such as economic imperatives, which become stratified into the authorised heritage discourse through processes of consultation and the issuing of guidance documents and policies, which have the effect of homogenising interactions with places and how they might be drawn into the heritage assemblage. Guidance documents can be perceived of as a 'diagram' in Deleuzian terms, a means of tracing heritage onto a prescribed set of behaviours, which define the ways in which a place might be perceived as significant and seek to stratify the place as heritage, to stabilise its effect, rather than release the potential of the past to de-stabilise the future (Bille 2012, 115). The inscription of sites onto heritage lists or schedules of monuments is a means through which official heritage is constructed, the lists becoming a means for 'forcefully not forgetting' the past (Harrison 2013b, 580–1). This creates particular forms of memory, which may lead to a form of 'cultural freezing' as work is undertaken to maintain the stratified narrative rather than allow for new creative and productive engagements with the past, effectively privileging one narrative over others (Bille 2012, 107; Harrison 2013b, 590). Heritage becomes a process of categorising as a response to a fear of loss, rather than a means of mediating between the past and the present (Harrison 2013b, 587).

The application of assemblage approaches reveals, however, that this diagrammatic approach to heritage can have unintended consequences, which might lead to the over-coding of heritage discourse. Sharon MacDonald (2009) describes, for example, how the development of legislation for the designation of heritage in post-war Germany had the inadvertent and contentious effect of automatically preserving elements of Nazi heritage, which many wished to forget. This actualisation of the recent past as heritage forced the use of heritage to be reviewed and reflected upon, with new potential emerging for Nazi heritage to be understood in terms of the lessons it could teach about the past, rather than valorising this period in history. Therefore, even where elements of the heritage assemblage appear stratified and strongly coded, they can become de-stratified and over-coded, here as the persistence of materials came to make unexpected demands of the accepted heritage discourse as it came into contact with political opinion regarding the particular 'past' that it seemingly represented. We have seen in the case of the Hilsea Lines (Chapter 3) how inscription as a heritage asset may be understood as a means of stratifying and homogenising a site into a particular regime of value and understanding. However the materials do not respect this process, irrupting into practice and being disruptive, demanding forms of engagement in their own terms – meaning that heritage practices are never entirely stratified and always

emerge as a mixture, with there being potential for power (affect) to emerge from the assemblage in unpredictable ways, which may be transformative in determining the trajectory of a particular site, or may become deterritorialised into the wider domain of heritage practice. We might question, therefore whether something is lost in the process of inscription as heritage: how can we grapple with the ways in which materials call on us to value places and things outside of these formalised, official, regimes (Pétursdóttir 2013, 42)?

Yet the materials can also have implications for this 'official' practice; an example of such deterritorialisation comes in the form of the remains of the Shakespearean Rose Theatre in London. The site was excavated as a part of a re-development project in 1989, but it quickly became apparent that the preservation of the site was considerably better than predicted and that the development would disturb this site which was widely perceived as of international importance (see Biddle 1989; Wainwright 1989). The situation at the Rose de-stratified the heritage practices of the time, revealing a lack of provision for the preservation of sites. The material created friction between the economic and heritage domains, which was exacerbated by the consolidation of a protest movement into political pressure, eventually resulting in a change to heritage policy. The Rose example demonstrates well how the rhizomatic elements of the heritage assemblage might de-stabilise the stratified discourse, leading to an actualisation of alternative forms of power and an over-coding of stratified structures. What emerged, however, with an emphasis on preservation rather than excavation, was a policy which was created at the intersection of domains – politics is, after all, a compromise, and that is what occurred in the planning policy of the 1990s, an authorised discourse which had implications for development but was also shaped by these relations of externality. Pendlebury (2013, 717) makes the important point that a degree of stratification is desirable in such instances, as a stratified, authorised heritage discourse creates a tangible idea of heritage which can circulate within and influence other domains, becoming deterritorialised. Although it represents a hegemonic structure of power within heritage, this stratified discourse also creates the potential to de-stabilise political and economic structures through deterritorialisation and therefore bring about changes in the ways in which the past might be brought to bear on the future.

In Chapter 3 I considered how processes of inscription have implications for objects, as they itinerate through a textual realm and are transformed through documentation. Inscription onto heritage lists can be seen as a similar process, the process coding the ways in which people might interact with a particular building or place as legislation serves to 'protect' the monument. We can see, therefore, that inscription is not a neutral process, but a transformative one. The implications of this transformation are complex and, at times, severe, however. Firstly, an inscription onto a list such as the National Heritage List for England outlines what it is that makes a particular monument or building significant. The legislation does not exist to protect the building or monument *per se*, but rather to protect this significance: what we might view as the official or authorised heritage narrative. Therefore, change is allowed to monuments if it does not erode this significance.

Here we can see the opportunity for tension to emerge, as change might be allowed which, whilst retaining the official significance, might have implications for other virtual or actualised capacities of the monument's past to irrupt into, for example, performances of identity or place making. One example of such a contentious site is Old Oswestry hillfort in Shropshire. Old Oswestry is scheduled as an ancient monument, enshrining its national significance on the basis that it is a particularly well preserved example of an unusual monument type. Debate has run over several years about plans for new housing outside of the area of the scheduled monument. Debate has hinged on the nuances of planning policy and Historic England, whilst objecting to some of the plans, agreed to others provided that conditions were met, as the views are not deemed to contribute materially to the significance of the hillfort. However, among local residents and the wider archaeological community a grassroots group Hands Off Old Oswestry Hillfort (HOOOH) has disputed this 'official' discourse and developed into a local action group who promote the cultural and natural heritage of the hillfort, actualising alternative forms of heritage and generating a powerful movement which has partially de-coded the 'official' heritage narrative through resistance. What we see is Historic England privileging an official heritage, but researchers and local people engaging with the monument in different ways, actualising alternative realities, which intersect with elements of the official narrative, but also diverge in ways which allow these narratives to be enrolled in the production of resistance and protest.

The Old Oswestry case, and others like it, reveal a fundamental problem with the diagrammatic approach to heritage – that is that they may serve to exclude and be inappropriate in certain circumstances, creating a singular reality rather than equipping agencies and communities to deal with a plurality of heritage *realities*. In some extreme cases the designation of monuments means that they fall into neglect as there is little which can be done to bring them into use without causing unacceptable levels of harm to their significance. Discussing this issue in relation to UNESCO World Heritage Site designation, Leah Horowitz (2016, 181) highlights how local action groups, which are more rhizomatic in structure than stratified official heritage bodies, are able to exercise power in different ways, for example through coercion, and, in doing so, cause the virtual capacities of heritage sites to be actualised in alternative ways and, therefore, to influence how those places unfold in the future.

Inscription of sites and monuments onto heritage lists is a form of stratification, of creating a concept of heritage, and identifying sites that are of heritage value and those that are not. Much like the process of collecting objects in museums, this inscription is a process of assigning value, of categorising, and is not a neutral process, but one through which power dynamics are negotiated (see Harrison 2013b). Forms of knowledge are created through interactions with these collections, which are a means through which free flows of people and things can be controlled. Yet, new structures of power can emerge in moments of friction. Things or monuments can be made into Bodies without Organs, as they are pulled out of stratified, sanctioned heritage discourse into new bundles of interaction, both causing affect but,

also, becoming something else as other pasts irrupt into the present. Assemblage thought provides a valuable tool for critical analysis of heritage discourse, in understanding what is viewed as heritage, by whom and for whom. But, as a means of approaching heritage it also provides a way of thinking, in practical terms, about the potential implications of heritage designation and the ways in which rhizomatic (or meshwork-like in DeLanda's terms) and arborescent (or hierarchical in DeLanda's terms) structures of power might be brought together in more sustainable ways. The aim of such an approach is not to impose a form of heritage but to develop a new heritage discourse which is sensitive to local requirements, which does not legitimise certain forms of heritage at the expense of others and allows for creative engagements with the past to create alternative 'lines of flight' for future productive entanglements with buildings and monuments. These ideas of heritage might de-stabilise the current hegemony to reveal new voices and mobilise and empower those who are marginalised by 'official heritage' to engage with the past to shape futures which are more representative and democratic. After all, the very purpose of assemblage thought is to shake up structures of power and reveal the ways in which alternatives might emerge.

Reflection: Assembling alternatives

The aim of this book has been to introduce readers to the productive engagements which archaeologists might have with assemblage thought. Whilst it has detailed concepts and tools which might be brought to bear on archaeological data, objects and sites, it has also set out to show how thinking in this way allows us to reject a concept of a singular and independent 'past out there', to instead consider the implications of relations with things from the past. Throughout the emphasis has been on alternative ways of coming to know the past. In Chapter 1 we saw how assemblage thought, in providing a means of flattening the modern western ontological perspective, makes us open to other ontological possibilities. In particular, it was shown how we can move beyond building singular narratives of the past, to explore the surfacing of alternative realities and understand the affective nature of relations with the world, a theme picked up in terms of archaeological methods in the first part of this final chapter. We also saw how such ideas are not new to archaeologists, and that a range of approaches are available to help guide our interactions with the past. Chapter 2 introduced some of these tools from the perspective of assemblage thought, showing how our dominant frameworks, of concepts such as temporality and boundedness, might be de-centred and disrupted by assemblage thought, creating a generative friction through which alternative perspectives might emerge. We then turned to more specific archaeological examples, to use the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari in particular to think about the relationships we have with objects from the past and their implications for our understanding of past societies. This showed that reflecting on objects in this way can reveal their fractionality and their fluidity, in particular allowing us to account for their material properties and the properties of the relations between people

and things, particularly as they are mediated through archaeological research and processes of textualisation. A concern with the material follows in the discussion of urbanism, which re-conceptualises towns as bundles of affective processes and shows how assemblage allows us to play with ideas of scale, causality and materiality to explore the emergence of alternative systems of power and account for the more-than-human elements of urban life.

Where does all of this get us? As has been discussed in this chapter, assemblage thought radically shifts the way we approach the past. Archaeology becomes a means of thinking and coming to terms with a fragmented and fractional past, rather than a means of recovering a singular and total past, in a way which allows us to rethink persistent archaeological issues such as urbanism (Chapter 4). It provides a means of exploring relations between methods and interpretation, of understanding the implications of our relations with the world for our knowledge of the past. As such it is a reflexive body of thought, and one which allows us to question and break down accepted ways of doing to allow new, generative, interventions into the past. Furthermore, by appreciating multiplicity, fluidity and unfolding it becomes possible to explore power not as a property of a society but as a generated effect of relations. With a focus on the molecular comes a focus on particularities, but also an ability to understand that the past was not simply a set of hierarchical relations and defined entities, but rather a messy and vibrant bundle of entangled, affective relations. Assemblage thought equips us to attempt to map these relations, to shift our focus from writing a past to exploring pasts, a shift which can only be productive, exciting and create a deeper understanding of the (more-than-) human past.

Note

- 1 Terms defined in guidance produced by English Heritage intended to assist in the identification of the significance of heritage sites and the management of change to them.

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